

## Public Involvement Overview

January 2009

	Month
Hotline Calls*	21
Comment Sense Submissions/Inquiries**	201
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	20
Presentation/Events	12
Neighborhood Boards	8
TAC	0
Community meetings	0

\*Calls directly to the hotline 808.566.2299

\*\* Individual submissions/inquiries. Does not include individual transcript comments from Public Hearings. Only includes letters received before January 31, 2009 by comment team and not all letters DTS/RTD has.



# Honolulu On The Move

NEWSLETTER OF THE HONOLULU HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Period Extended

If you haven't commented yet on the potential impacts of rail transit detailed in Draft Environmental Impact Statement, there's still time. The deadline for public comments has been extended by the Federal Transit Administration to **February 6, 2009**. You can comment online at the project's website: [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org) or send your comments by mail to the: **Department of Transportation Services, 650 South King Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813** (must be postmarked by February 6).



We have already received several hundred comments by mail, on-line and at the Public Hearings in December.

The project

team will review and consider each comment as the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) is prepared; all comments will be addressed, so be sure to include your name and mailing address in your comment. In addition, every comment will be included in an appendix to the Final EIS.

## Rainy Winters and Rail Transit

*Aloha!* Winter storms can bring rain, wind and unexpected power outages to O'ahu. What does that mean for Honolulu's rail system? How will trains perform when storm clouds blow into town? Based on experiences in other cities, the answer is: safely. Steel-wheeled rail systems run safely in cities such as Portland, Salt Lake City, New York and Chicago, where the winter climate is far harsher than our tropical islands.

In Honolulu, rainfall drenching the guideway is likely to be the most common weather problem. Too much water on the tracks can loosen the traction between train wheels and the rails. To remedy this, the guideway is being designed to drain water away from the tracks. In addition, electronic sensors in modern rail cars sense slippage and take appropriate action, from increasing braking distances to accelerating slower.

Rainy weather should not cause the steel tracks to rust. With regular preventive maintenance, corrosion will not be a problem.

### Electrical Outages

Winter storms can cause electricity outages. Since trains and rail stations will be electrically powered, the system's infrastructure is being designed to handle service disruptions. For example, trains will draw power from many points along the route, so an outage in a few areas should not disrupt service.



What happens if electrical power is lost in significant area of the East Kapolei-to-Ala Moana Center route?

First, train brakes are designed to stop the rail cars even without power. Second, lights will stay on in trains and stations; backup batteries will provide lighting for several hours. Third, the train operations center will communicate with passengers via the public address system and intercom and provide guidance.

If power is restored within a short time, service will resume. With a prolonged outage, the operations center will direct passengers to exit the trains and walk along a lighted emergency walkway on the guideway to the nearest station. For those unable to exit rail cars, help will be provided by emergency responders and transit staff. Passengers will be met at the train station by a coordinated response from emergency responders and city transportation workers.



JANUARY 2009



# Honolulu On The Move

## Contact Us

You can reach us by calling the project hotline at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org).

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like be removed from our mailing list.

## New Online Content: Videos and Rail Station Maps



Set your Internet browser to [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org) and check out the new content on the project's website. The online home of Honolulu's rail transit system has been updated with state-of-the-art computer animated fly-throughs of the Salt Lake route and the Airport route. With one click of the mouse, you will see a bird's eye view of each route as well as potential locations for rail stations.

Another new feature is conceptual rail station renderings – you can see how each rail station will be integrated into its neighborhood, from the elevated guideway to the rail station platforms to park-and-ride lots at selected locations. The renderings are interactive, so you can rotate them 360 degrees.

Finally, the website has a video guide to the Draft EIS that combines key facts, graphics and video footage to help you understand the document. If you would like a DVD with all these features to share at your school or workplace, contact us for a free copy at [info@honolulutransit.org](mailto:info@honolulutransit.org) or call 566-2299.

Look for more video content on the project website later this year.

## Arizona Residents Applaud New Rail



Many residents, commuters and businesses in Arizona are

celebrating the recent launch of a new steel-wheeled rail service that connects the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.

According to news accounts, the mood on the trains has been positive as riders relax, listen to music and read. Ridership has been good, with evening trains almost full as commuters return home. Some residents reported using the rail system because of its convenience or to reduce their carbon footprint and promote sustainability. Other passengers said in news articles they were riding to save money on gas and parking.

Rail has also brought economic benefits. City leaders in Tempe are crediting the rail system with attracting \$4 billion in projects, and the mayor of Phoenix attributes thousands of jobs to rail.

## OUR OPINION

# Airport route makes sense for rail line

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 01, 2009

After months of political maneuvering, the City Council has agreed to run the rail transit system through Honolulu Airport instead of Salt Lake, a route that initially was approved to gain enough votes for passage. The airport route makes sense because it is estimated to carry more passengers, eventually serving Waikiki.

The Salt Lake route was approved nearly two years ago after Mayor Mufi Hannemann apparently was under the impression that he needed that route to garner the vote of Councilman Romy Cachola, who represents the district, in favor of the rail system between Kapolei and Ala Moana. Cachola said last year that he would have voted for the rail system anyway.

The airport route would cost \$200 million more to build than the Salt Lake route, but it would average an estimated 95,000 passengers a day, 7,000 more than the Salt Lake route would attract, according to a draft environmental impact statement. The airport route also would require less land conversion.

Meanwhile, U.S. District Judge Helen Gillmor has asked the Council to move the rail away from Halekauwila Street, next to the Prince Kuhio Federal Building, to Queen Street, because of security concerns. Gillmor has expressed concern about possible terrorist threats to the federal buildings, which would be "prime targets."

Gillmor told the Council that the rail line would be at the same level as the windows of three judges' chambers, but Toru Hamayasu, the city's chief transit planner, said the rail's level can be changed in the vicinity. He said the rail plans meet requirements of the Department of Homeland Security and can be changed, if needed, to comply with what Gillmor has described as "classified" requisites.



February 1, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Rail money

#### **We can't afford not to consider use of funds**

At a time when state leaders are searching for solutions to overcome the \$1.8 billion revenue shortfall projected by the Council on Revenues earlier this month, we cannot afford to dismiss any potential solutions, regardless of how unpopular they might be.

Given the nature of the challenge we face, it is disappointing The Advertiser came out so quickly against a preliminary idea to explore the temporary use of the general excise tax surcharge for rail to help balance the state budget.

The idea — just one of many that were raised during collaborative budget discussions between the administration and legislative leaders — would transfer the surcharge collected during the next fiscal year, approximately \$165 million, to the state's general fund. To ensure sufficient funds are raised for the O'ahu rail project, the surcharge, which is authorized to be collected over 15 years, would be extended for an additional year.

The use of rail funds is possible at this time because enough funds have already been collected to continue the current planning and design phases of the project.

The one-year extension of the surcharge would allow for the replenishing of the fund for rail purposes at a point in the development of the project when it is needed.

The decisions our leaders must make will be tough and in some cases unpopular. But, they are decisions that need to be made. We must be willing to rationally discuss advantages and impacts of all ideas under consideration, and resist the urge to dismiss ideas without first listening to and understanding the reasons these options are being considered.

Robert Piper | Deputy director, state Department of Budget and Finance

## Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, February 1, 2009

### Rail funds belong to Oahu, not state

I was originally against the rail project; I felt the people should decide, and voters chose rail. That's the democratic process. This is America and we should all abide by the decisions of the majority. So I accepted it.

But now I hear our governor and some lawmakers want to take away the rail funds and use them to balance the state budget and use the money statewide. This is wrong and goes against the decision residents of Oahu made, and who are paying the rail tax.

When the Legislature first passed the general excise tax surcharge, all counties were given the opportunity to use the half-percent for their own projects on their islands. They chose not to exercise that option.

So why should we Oahu taxpayers now have to pay for neighbor island projects because there is a budget shortfall? This is unfair to all of us on Oahu, whether or not we voted for rail.

Mike Chang  
Honolulu



February 2, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### **Rail money**

#### **Hanabusa should know better than to raid fund**

It is surprising and perplexing to hear Sen. Hanabusa talking about using the dedicated mass-transit general excise tax revenue for other projects. Having been in office as long as she had been, she should be aware that the primary reason Honolulu jumped ahead of so many other cities competing for federal mass-transit dollars was its commitment to locally fund a major portion of the system. That made all the difference.

If Honolulu (or, more accurately, local politicians politicizing the issue) shows lack of commitment to the most important public works project in recent history, the federal government will send the money elsewhere.

Hawai'i is most fortunate to have a congressional delegation with the influence and the right strategy to bring nearly a billion dollars into our economy, but their efforts will surely be undermined, as it was a decade ago by a vacillating City Council, if Hanabusa follows through with her plans.

Sens. Inouye and Akaka were instrumental in securing the critical start-up money in the Senate that gave Hawai'i its critical advantage. Congressman Abercrombie and Congresswoman Hirono got the funding request through the House.

This is not the time to pull the rug from under these efforts at this stage of the process.

Francis M. Nakamoto | Honolulu

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## Letters to the Editor

For Monday, February 2, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 02, 2009

### **Don't divert rail funds to balance budget**

I'm pleased to learn that the Honolulu City Council has finally chosen to select an airport route for the rail system. I'm sure many more people would have voted for rail with the airport connection. It's the best thing for both Oahu's residents and visitors in the long run.

Rail is vital to managing future traffic congestion and growth, especially on the west side, and to bringing in much-needed jobs and federal funding during this recession. The train is moving ahead and picking up momentum.

I hope our state legislators and the governor are paying attention. Diverting Honolulu's rail funds to pay for a state budget shortfall is totally unacceptable.

Jason Wong  
Makiki



## Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, February 3, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 03, 2009

### **Anti-railers' numbers just don't add up**

When comparing the state's Nimitz flyover to the elevated toll roads that had been proposed by rail opponents (["Nimitz flyover might help traffic flow," "Our Opinion," Jan. 30](#)), don't forget the most important fact - cost. According to Brennan Morioka of the state Department of Transportation, \$600 million is a realistic cost for building a two-lane, 2.2-mile elevated road.

The anti-rail crowd said their elevated, two-lane toll road would be 10 miles long, nearly five times longer than the state's proposal, yet cost only \$900 million to build. Did they have a magic formula for building roads that is unknown to the licensed engineers and builders at the state DOT? Or did they just make up their numbers?

A sober look at the price tag of the two proposals calls into question the credibility and honesty of the anti-rail ringleaders.

Blake Miyasaki  
Hawaii Kai

February 4, 2009

## State on thin ice in tapping transit tax

*By David Shapiro*

The state seems to be clinging to the idea of siphoning the O'ahu rail transit tax to balance its budget, despite a lukewarm public response and Mayor Mufi Hannemann's assertion that the idea is "harebrained."

The transit tax is a half-cent add-on to the state's 4-percent general excise tax that is paid by O'ahu residents only to raise the local share of the \$5.3 billion commuter train from Kapolei to Honolulu.

The tax, which the Legislature authorized the city to assess for 15 years, is currently bringing in about \$165 million a year, with the state already skimming 10 percent to cover nonexistent collection costs.

Under proposals being floated in budget talks between the Lingle administration and the Legislature, the transit money would be transferred to the state general fund for a year or two to help relieve a \$1.8 billion budget deficit over the next two years.

The tax would be extended a like number of years on the back end of its 15-year authorization to make up the city's losses.

Hannemann and some City Council members strongly object, saying the diversion could delay rail and undermine the city's application for \$1 billion in federal funds.

The strongest public defense of siphoning the tax came over the weekend in a letter to the editor from deputy state budget director Robert Piper, who said the transfer is possible because the city already has enough in the bank — about \$300 million — to cover the current planning and design phase of rail.

"We must be willing to rationally discuss advantages and impacts of all ideas under consideration, and resist the urge to dismiss ideas without first listening to and understanding the reasons these options are being considered," Piper said.

Fair enough, but if they want to keep all options on the table, how about putting a specific proposal on the table so we can see all the ramifications and have the rational discussion he suggests?

The transit tax was levied by the City Council, not the Legislature, and the money belongs to the city.

Can the state legally transfer a city tax raised for a dedicated purpose to the state general fund for another purpose? The state Supreme Court struck down the Legislature's transfer of insurance assessments to the general fund.

The bigger issue is fairness. If a tax paid by O'ahu residents only is siphoned by the state, Oahuans would effectively be taxed at a rate of 4.5 percent for the same state services that residents of other counties get for a tax rate of 4 percent.

Talk about inviting a tax-discrimination lawsuit by unhappy O'ahu taxpayers — not to mention a political backlash against O'ahu lawmakers who let their constituents bear a disproportionate burden in balancing the state budget.

The state can't brush off the city's legitimate concern about disrupting the transit project and running up its cost.

If a tax that was sold as being dedicated to transit is raided this early in the game, what's to prevent it from being raided again and again? How can we effectively manage our biggest public works project ever under such chaotic circumstances?



The state's collection fee is already running up the project cost by 10 percent, and extending the tax by a year or two would inflate the end cost of transit to O'ahu taxpayers by another 10 percent or more.

Add the fact that the current rate of transit tax collections won't come close to covering the \$4 billion-plus local share at the end of 15 years, and we have cause for serious taxpayer alarm.

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February 4, 2009

# Hawaii set for years of roadwork in 'huge' \$4B highways plan

## 6-year effort includes Nimitz 'flyover,' better bike access

By mary vorsino

Advertiser Urban Honolulu Writer

Get ready for six years of road construction and traffic delays as the state kicks off its unprecedented, \$4 billion highway modernization plan meant to revamp the major arteries commuters use.

Brennon Morioka, state Department of Transportation director, said the highways plan is nearly as significant as the advent of the freeway system in Hawai'i in the 1960s and '70s. The changes will be that big, and will be around for generations to come.

"It's huge," Morioka said. "I don't think the department has for a very long time taken a comprehensive approach like this. We have gotten into a pattern of simply doing what we can with what we have."

And he added the projects will affect traffic in a big way in small and large communities statewide. He also said it will all be worth it, with considerably shortened commute times for many, improved signage and traffic tracking, better bike access and fewer highway deaths.

"I think people realize the benefits at the end of the tunnel," Morioka said.

The state plans to hold community meetings on the plan later in the year and will also launch a Web site as early as this week so people can track the progress of the plan online. (A link to the new site will be available at <http://hawaii.gov/dot>).

Meanwhile, there is some early opposition to key parts of the plan.

Some Kalihi residents and businesses are speaking out against the long-controversial Nimitz Highway "flyover," an elevated, two-lane roadway that would replace the existing morning contraflow lane on the thoroughfare. The \$600 million, 2.2-mile flyover is the most expensive project in the highways plan.

Ron Jones, Kalihi Business Association board member and past president, called the flyover an "eyesore" that would cripple small businesses in the area. The flyover would run from the Ke'ehi interchange to Pacific Street, zipping commuters through Kalihi with no way to get off until its end.

## bicyclists' concerns

Morioka said the flyover — first proposed in the mid-1990s — would be reversible, with two lanes heading into town in the morning and two lanes going west-bound in the afternoon. He said drivers who want to stop in Kalihi would still be able to do so by taking Nimitz Highway, and added the flyover is the only option for relieving Nimitz bottlenecks. "The only way to go is up," he said.

The modernization plan is also raising concerns among several bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups who say it is too car-centric and vague about the millions of dollars in improvements to bike lanes and pedestrian safety.

"We wonder how this is any different than business as usual," said Justin Fanslau, spokesman for One Voice for Livable Islands, a coalition of advocacy groups, including AARP and the Hawaii Bicycling League. "You cannot build simple streets, roads and highways and expect to improve air quality."

He said the plan, which would beef up existing bike and pedestrian safety programs and also dedicate money to new bike lanes and pedestrian signals, is still about building roads and accommodating other modes of transportation. He said instead it should be about providing safe access to all transportation modes.

"It's really a big mind shift," he said.

## projects statewide

The plan, which was unveiled Jan. 22, would touch residents in just about every community on every island, except Lana'i. It includes some 183 projects, from setting up a \$50 million afternoon contraflow lane on H-1 Freeway west-bound to constructing a Lahaina Bypass for about \$175 million.

On O'ahu alone, some 76 projects are planned at a cost of \$1.9 billion.

The plan is designed to decrease the number of people killed on Hawai'i highways each year by about 40 and cut daily commute times by as much as 30 minutes. Officials estimate someone who lives in Kapolei and works in Honolulu could save up to \$1,825 a year in gas, time spent in traffic and car wear and tear.

But that savings won't come cheap in the short run.

The state said half of the plan would be paid for by state and federal appropriations, while the rest would come from increases in fuel and weight taxes and vehicle registration fees, setting the average driver back about \$170 a year.

The tax and fee increases wouldn't go into effect right away, but would be triggered by 1 percent job growth over two consecutive quarters. State officials say the growth trigger is designed to make sure people can afford the increases.

Morioka said many of the larger projects would start construction phases in about two years, when the job growth requirement is expected to have been met and the economy is forecast to be improving. Some of the projects are in planning phases now, while other smaller work (such as a complimentary tow program on the freeways) is set to kick off as early as this summer.

Key state lawmakers have backed the tax and fee increases, which require legislative approval. State Sen. Will Espero, Transportation Committee chairman, said the increases aren't ideal, but are needed to make overdue road upgrades.

"If we didn't have a growing population, we wouldn't have to make such investments," Espero said last week. "And until we have a perfect transportation system, we do have to widen roads and build new roadways."

## few details released

Few specifics on projects in the plan have been released, beyond estimated price tags. Some of the projects were suggested years ago to tackle bottlenecks or safety concerns. Others were added as the plan was being compiled. Many target congestion, but others focus on stabilizing bridges, protecting shorelines and stabilizing slopes. Some would also beef up traffic management systems.

Though the plan is designed to cut traffic congestion, commutes are still projected to worsen over the next decade. The state says Kapolei residents spend about 130 minutes in traffic on average per day. In 10 years, with the plan in place, that commute will increase by 10 minutes. Without the changes, Kapolei residents would spend about 170 minutes commuting to town each day, according to state figures.

Gordon Lum, the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization executive director, said some people would say the plan isn't worth the cost if commuting times are still expected to increase. But he disagrees and thinks most drivers will come around sooner or later. "The only way you can get better (commute times) is to build more highways," he said. "And what would that cost us?"



February 5, 2009

## Bidding opens on \$5.3B rail project

First contract worth up to \$600M covers design, construction of 6.5 miles

*By Sean Hao*  
*Advertiser Staff Writer*

Let the bidding begin.

City officials yesterday began soliciting bids for the first leg of Honolulu's planned \$5.3 billion, 20-mile rail transit system.

The contract, which has an estimated value of \$550 million to \$600 million excluding extras for contingencies, will cover the design and construction of the first 6.5 miles of elevated guideway from East Kapolei to Leeward Community College. It will be the biggest deal so far on what's expected to be Hawai'i's largest-ever public works project.

The procurement is part of a plan to launch limited train service in phases starting in late 2013 and ending in late 2018.

"It's obviously a big step in this project," City Council Chairman Todd Apo said. "It's a project that's going to bring some economic benefit to our island at a time when we need it so moving forward with it as soon as possible is really going to help our island get through these economic doldrums."

The contract is expected to be awarded after the federal government approves the project's environmental impact statement. City officials hope that will happen this fall so that construction can begin in December.

Contractors have until March 13 to respond to the request for proposals. The selection process will take about six months and then final negotiations will be undertaken with the proposer providing the best value to the city.

City officials had wanted to issue the request for proposals earlier. However, the process was delayed slightly because the City Council had to fix a glitch in the original law directing the city to go forward with the project. The council passed legislation fixing that problem last week.

Under current plans, the first construction deal will be a design and build contract, which means the team selected only will be responsible for designing and building the first six miles of elevated guideway. That deal will be followed by separate contracts for vehicles and systems and for a maintenance yard.

Currently, the city plans to operate the train system, though that can change between now and late 2013 when limited service is set to begin. Full service is scheduled to start by 2019.

"This is a significant milestone and a tremendous step forward," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said in a news release. "O'ahu's voters told us they wanted a rail system and we've taken that message to heart."

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# City Begins Accepting Bids to Start Phase I of Rail



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com  
February 05, 2009 04:33 PM

After years of planning, Honolulu has begun the process to start building its future mass transit system.

At 4 p.m. Thursday, the city began accepting bids to find a company to design and install the track from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands.

Rail planners have budgetted up to \$600 million for the project for the six and half mile stretch.

The winning contractor will be announced in the Fall.



Last Updated ( February 05, 2009 06:44 PM )

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## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, February 5, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 05, 2009

### **State can't get away with taking rail funds**

The City Council should introduce a bill saying that if the state passes legislation to raid the rail tax money, the county will immediately suspend collecting the 0.5 percent general excise tax surcharge until all the stolen money is repaid with interest. It would be a breach of their fiduciary responsibility - and, more to the point, political suicide - for Council members to knuckle under and allow the state to levy a special tax on Oahu taxpayers that will be used to finance spending on the neighbor islands.

Jim Henshaw  
Kailua

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## City seeks bids for rail line's first phase

[By Star-Bulletin staff](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 06, 2009

The city is accepting bids for construction for its \$4 billion rail transit system, paving the way for Mayor Mufi Hannemann's goal of a groundbreaking later this year.

The first segment, from the starting point in East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands in Pearl City, totals 6.5 miles at an estimated construction cost of \$550 million to \$600 million.

### On the Net

» The city's request for the first phase of construction will be available online at [www.honolulu.gov/pur/index.htm](http://www.honolulu.gov/pur/index.htm).

The contract would cover track installation, road surface restoration and construction of a viaduct. The stations would be constructed in another contract.

"This is a significant milestone and a tremendous step forward," Hannemann said Tuesday.

"Procurement of the guideway contractor is a major, affirmative step in our goal to break ground by the end of this year. This is also a clear signal to officials in Washington, D.C., that Honolulu is serious about rail transit this time."

Contractors will have until March 13 to respond, and the selection process will take about six months. The city expects to announce the winning firm in the fall.

The city will also ask for additional bids this year to design rail stations and a maintenance yard in Kapolei. Additionally, the city is also scheduled to buy the trains, traction power and train control systems.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, February 6, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 06, 2009

### **'Flyover' will destroy beautiful views forever**

The governor's proposal to build the controversial "Nimitz flyover," is a terrible idea. The Star-Bulletin's endorsement of this idea, (Editorial Jan. 30), is equally shocking.

With plans under way for a transit project that will decimate substantial portions of our island's beauty and create permanent structural intrusions into our communities, how can we create, in addition, a huge, behemoth highway? This flyover will dominate the view plane for tens of thousands of people and be the first thing millions of visitors see as they arrive in Hawaii. And just how will this flyover overcome the backup when it arrives in downtown?

We live in an age when progressive cities such as San Francisco and New York City have torn down the ill-conceived highways that block invaluable views and create community eyesores. It is beyond comprehension that our leaders won't insist that transportation planners propose alternatives that solve our traffic problems without destroying the state's single greatest asset, the beauty of our islands.

Betsy Connors  
Kailua

February 8, 2009

## Details coming on rail impact

### Environmental review process requires city to respond on issues

*By Sean Hao*

*Advertiser Staff Writer*

City transportation officials have a lot of explaining to do.

Friday was the last day for the public to comment and raise concerns about the city's draft environmental impact statement for a planned \$5.43 billion elevated commuter rail.

Now the city must go about responding to hundreds of comments and likely thousands of questions about the 20-mile East Kapolei-to-Ala Moana rail project as part of a lengthy environmental review. The environmental study is a major hurdle in the city's effort to obtain more than \$1 billion in federal money to build the train system.

The city expects to complete the environmental review in time to begin construction in December. The city's timeline calls for service between West Loch and Waipahu to start in late 2013 and full service to Ala Moana by the end of 2018. That timetable assumes that the environmental impact review will go relatively smoothly. For that to happen, the city will need to adequately address a range of concerns about noise, aesthetics, archaeological conservation, energy consumption and more.

Common concerns raised by local residents and agencies include:

- Why build the project's first phase in East Kapolei rather than urban Honolulu?
- Whether the city adequately considered rail alternatives such as elevated managed highway lanes, bus rapid transit and an at-grade (ground-level) train system.
- Would it be better to have the train go directly to Waipi'o and Mililani or through Salt Lake?
- Should the current route be changed to avoid the Prince Kuhio Federal Building to address concerns about security and possible terrorist attacks?
- Are the city's cost projections accurate and what will the city do if it runs out of money before the project is finished?
- How will the city address concerns that the train will contribute to Honolulu's crime problems?


Other comments raise questions about the accuracy of the city's ridership predictions and traffic forecasts.

City officials already are grouping and categorizing concerns and preparing responses, which will be



included in a final environmental impact statement, which they hope to release this summer.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, February 8, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 08, 2009


### **At last, rail begins to become a reality**

The city just started accepting bids to start building the first leg of the rail system. This is a milestone for many of us residents who have waited for more than 30 years for rail to become a reality. So let's get it done as quickly and efficiently as possible. We need rail for traffic relief and it will benefit everyone.

Jason Wong  
Honolulu

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Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

February 9, 2009

## Taxes, fees piling up

### Recession forces state, city to reach further into residents' wallets

*By Christie Wilson  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu taxpayers can expect to shell out hundreds of dollars more each year in taxes and government fees as the state and city scramble to maintain revenues during the deepening economic recession.

Gov. Linda Lingle is proposing a 10-cent bump in the state gasoline tax and vehicle fee increases that would cost taxpayers \$170 more a year, and in July, a general excise tax exemption on gasoline expires, meaning consumers will be charged 4.5 percent of their purchases at the pump on top of federal, state and city gas taxes calculated into the per-gallon price.

Honolulu residents already have been paying a half-percent surcharge on the general excise tax at an annual cost estimated at \$365 to \$450 per household, with revenues from the surcharge earmarked for a rail transit system.

The tax and fee hikes are taking place at a time when Honolulu residents are in the middle of multiyear sewer and water rate increases while facing job layoffs, wage cuts and other financial woes. Although the government levies, when taken on their own, may seem manageable, there is concern that taxpayers are being nickel-and-dimed to death with a steady stream of increases.

"You're tapping into a source that is already strung out and that's the problem. ... It's hitting people when they are down," said Leroy Laney, professor of finance and economics at Hawai'i Pacific University and economic adviser to First Hawaiian Bank.

"I don't know what else can be done about it. You've got to get the funds somehow."

Although any tax and fee increases will pinch household budgets, Laney noted their impact will be softened by low inflation that will moderate price increases for groceries, gas and other consumer goods.

## Vehicle fees

Under Lingle's proposal, the state gasoline tax would increase from 17 cents per gallon to 27 cents per gallon. Vehicle weight taxes charged by the state, currently set at three-quarters of a cent per pound for vehicles up to 4,000 pounds, would be increased by 2 cents per pound. State motor vehicle registration fees would be increased from \$25 per year to \$45 per year. Counties charge separate vehicle fees.

Officials said the proposed increases will generate an estimated \$174 million annually and help fund the governor's six-year, \$4 billion highway modernization plan.

They would be conditional, taking effect when Hawai'i experiences 1 percent job growth over two consecutive quarters, as determined by the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Officials said that likely won't happen until mid-2011.

"While it is important to be sensitive to the current financial situation of our families and businesses, we also need to plan for the future when the economy rebounds, and not just sit and wait for it to happen. This idea of an economic trigger tied to future growth in the economy means that we can do both," Lingle said in a statement announcing the plan.



State officials said taxpayers will be able to recoup at least a portion of the tax and fee increases, because the road improvements will result in savings in gas, time and vehicle wear. The Department of Transportation estimated that savings at about \$1,825 a year for someone who lives in Kapolei and works in Honolulu.

## Gas prices

The proposed gas tax increase comes as consumers are enjoying a respite from the record-breaking fuel prices of last summer, when O'ahu prices climbed to a peak of \$4.39 per gallon. Honolulu gas prices over the weekend averaged \$2.28 per gallon, according to AAA Hawaii.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Short Term Energy Outlook is projecting a less-steep increase in gas prices nationally this year of 19 cents per gallon, followed by a 31-cent increase in 2010.

State Rep. Joseph Souki, D-8th (Wailuku), sees the proposed gas tax increase as a "painless" way to squeeze more dollars from taxpayers, and more sensible in the long run instead of relying on government borrowing to fund road projects.

"The good thing about it is that you're not punishing future generations to pay for what we need now. Users who are using the roads now will pay for it, and that's not a bad idea," said Souki, chairman of the House Transportation Committee.

"For those who don't want to raise taxes but want all the services anyways, this is a bad idea. Then there are those who are akamai enough to understand if you don't have revenues, you can't do anything."

## Right time

Lowell Kalapa, head of the private, nonprofit Tax Foundation of Hawaii, favors an immediate increase in the gas tax, at a much smaller level, so the state doesn't waste time in generating revenue. Motorists would be more willing to accept increases now, Kalapa said, because gas prices are relatively low.

"You don't want to enable a higher cost of living, but on the other hand, unless you can find another way to raise money for highways, that's the only alternative," he said.

Kalapa said he is doubtful the economic triggers proposed by the governor will be reached anytime soon.

"Does the governor know something we don't know? We won't have that kind of growth. If we don't trigger the increases, then what will we do? I know it's politically unpopular to raise taxes, but on the other hand we could be in dire financial straits if we don't."

He said it would have been wiser to raise the tax by 2 or 3 cents and increase vehicle fees a couple years ago, and instead of exempting gas purchases from the general excise tax, dedicate GET revenues collected on gas purchases to the state's highway fund.

Although tapping into taxpayer pocketbooks, higher gasoline prices can spur conservation and prove more effective than tax credits and other incentives in encouraging electric cars and other technology, according to Kalapa.

"Raising the gas tax by 10 cents can be seen both as bad and good: Bad because it will cost more to drive; good because it will change people's habits and they will be more inclined to drive fuel-efficient vehicles," he said.

## 'Small price to pay'

Waipahu resident Jeroen Joosten, 32, said taxes in Hawai'i are very low compared with his native Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. He said he'd accept higher gas taxes in return for better roads.

"I think it's a small price to pay if the improvements will really be done," Joosten said.

Already in place are substantial water and sewer rate hikes that officials said are necessary to fund long-delayed repairs and improvements.

In 2006, the Honolulu Board of Water Supply implemented a 58 percent rate increase spread out over five years to lessen the impact on consumers. By July 2010, a single-family home that uses 13,000 gallons a month will be paying \$78.38 per bimonthly billing, or \$172 more a year than before the start of the rate increase.

An average household is now paying \$69.11 bimonthly, with charges climbing to \$74.72 in July.

The figures do not include power cost adjustments, which currently stand at \$1.22 per month.

## Sewer rates

Meanwhile, the city's Department of Environmental Services is halfway through a four-year rate hike that will increase the bimonthly bill for an average household by 107 percent. That translates to an additional \$900 per year in sewer charges by July 2010.

Sewer charges that are now \$138.96 per bimonthly billing will jump to \$164.12 in July, costing customers an additional \$151 annually. In the final year of the rate increase, sewer bills for the average household will rise to \$188.62 per bimonthly billing.

Homeowners are waiting for the next shoe to drop: real property taxes. Escalating property values in recent years allowed the city to keep homeowner tax rates flat this year after two years of rate cuts, but that has all changed.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hasn't released the administration's proposed budget for the next fiscal year, but city officials say they haven't ruled out new tax hikes and fee increases to offset a looming \$13 million to \$40 million deficit.

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Project Update2/9/2009

Honolulu seeks bids for new commuter-rail line's first segment

The city and county of Honolulu recently issued the first request for proposal for the proposed [Honolulu Rail Transit](#) commuter-rail project.

The city plans to award a construction contract for the 6.5-mile first segment of the elevated guideway between East Kapolei and Pearl Highlands. Expected to total between \$550 million and \$600 million, the design-build contract will include track and guideway viaduct construction, and surface restoration.

Bids are due March 13. The selection process will take about six months and Honolulu officials expect to award a contract in fall.

Later this year, the city and county plan to issue RFPs for rail station final design and maintenance yard construction. The city also plans to begin procuring vehicles, and traction power and train-control systems this year.

The Honolulu Rail Transit project is a proposed 20-mile elevated line that will connect West O'ahu with downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana, and eventually extend to Honolulu International Airport, Waikiki, the University of Hawaii-Manoa and Kalaeloa.

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February 10, 2009

## Ho'opili project harms traffic, agriculture

### 'Ewa Redevelopment Plan ignores long-term perils facing O'ahu

*By Kioni Dudley*

The Advertiser recently published an editorial on the need for quick approval of the latest revision of the 'Ewa Development Plan. But in its current form, the revised 'Ewa Development Plan will condemn commuters on H-1 and H-2 to ever-worsening traffic jams, with no possibility for relief.

The H-1 already has the among the worst freeway traffic congestion in the United States. With roughly 65,000 cars on the freeway every day, we have exceeded its carrying capacity. There is no room for more cars.

There is only one automobile corridor to town. The state Department of Transportation tells us that it cannot be expanded beyond Zipper lanes, and the people wouldn't stand for ugly double-decking in paradise even if there were money for it. We have clearly built ourselves into a "no build" situation.

But the city doesn't understand this. It has already approved zoning for 33,000 more dwellings on the 'Ewa plain. Nothing can be done to stop that construction. At two cars per family, that is 66,000 more cars. Two out of every three cars will join the rush hour traffic to Honolulu.

The rail will help, but not much. Studies show that even with rail, commuter traffic on H-1 and H-2 will grow worse.

Yet, amazingly, that's not all the planned housing that's out there. On top of these 33,000 already-zoned homes, there's another whole city of houses-12,000 homes with potentially two cars each — which is starting the approval process. This project is called Ho'opili. And the 'Ewa Development Plan embraces it by including its land within the Urban Growth Boundary, and by planning for it as if its existence is assured.

Ho'opili traffic will add to the freeway snarl for everyone on H-1 and H-2, but it will be particularly bad for those living on the 'Ewa Plain and Wai'anae Coast. Ho'opili will fill the entire open space between Kapolei and Waipahu. All of its commuters will pour onto Fort Weaver Road and H-1, headed to Honolulu in the morning rush. And all of the Ho'opili cars will be on the road to town in front of every current commuter from 'Ewa and Kapolei and beyond. There is nobody who now drives to town from the west side of the island who will not be behind all of the cars from Ho'opili.

There is another important reason to resist Ho'opili. The land it will take is some of our most precious agricultural land. Rated as A and B soils, on an A to E scale, it is all prime agricultural land. It is also low-lying land that gets plentiful sun and drains well. From sugar times, the Ho'opili land has been known as the Golden Triangle of farmland on O'ahu.

How precious are these A and B lands? Not one acre of A-quality land is found on the entire Big Island or Lana'i. No B quality is found on Moloka'i. Nearly half of O'ahu's A and B quality land has already been covered over by Mililani, Waipi'o, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia, the 'Ewa developments, and Kapolei. Once agriculture land is covered with roads and houses, it can never be restored.

We may need the Ho'opili land for survival. We sit in the ocean 2,000 miles from land. We've seen the price of oil rise so high, it destroyed two airlines, caused a major drop-off in tourism, brought a huge spike in food prices, and made import of many things by air and boat economically unfeasible. In years to come, the price of oil is expected to go even higher as demand grows exponentially in face of decreasing supply.

There is further reason for concern: Rising seas could not only destroy tourist beaches, but could also engulf our ports, forcing us to be self-sufficient or perish. In the past several months, more than 30 nations have experienced food riots, and so far one government has fallen. It could happen here.

We will also need lands for biofuels to run our electric plant, our cars, and the airplanes that serve us. We must save our best farmlands. It makes no sense to cover them over. We can only save them with public action.

Write or e-mail your city council member or the Department of Planning and Permitting, and tell them The 'Ewa Development Plan must be changed to move the Ho'opili land outside the Urban Growth Boundary, and to keep it in agriculture.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, February 11, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 11, 2009

### **Legislators, keep your hands off rail money**

It is beyond belief that some legislators want to raid the rail money to make up for the state budget shortfall, while quietly accepting pay raises for themselves. And didn't they say the rationale is because the governor and her staff got a raise already? You gotta be kidding.

Blake Miyasaki  
Hawaii Kai

February 15, 2009

## Letter to the Editor

### Rail money

### Take of funds could worsen Isle economy

Economic stimulus and creating jobs during this recession should be priorities for every policy maker and elected leader in our state.

Therefore, it is incomprehensible that Robert Piper of the state Department of Budget and Finance supports taking \$300 million from the city's GET surcharge, which could delay the project ("We can't afford not to consider use of funds," Feb. 1). This could threaten thousands of potential jobs and more than \$3 billion in economic stimulus.

Building rail transit will generate more than 11,000 jobs, creating paychecks for residents whose buying power will strengthen our economy.

Independent research by UH-West O'ahu economics professor Lawrence Boyd confirms this, demonstrating that the direct, indirect and induced local impact from building the airport route begins at \$307 million this year, increasing to \$1.2 billion in 2010 and \$2.1 billion in 2011.

His investigation shows the rail project could soften the recession's impact this year, and could help grow the economy in 2010.

In addition, if the state were to grab the revenues from the GET surcharge specifically designated for this project, it could disrupt our progress and shake the confidence of federal transit officials.

According to Gov. Lingle's Web site, two goals of her "five point plan for economic action" are "investing in improvements to our infrastructure" and "maximizing federal dollars and partnerships."

Honolulu's rail transit project can help her achieve both goals, but only if we stay the course, and keep the GET surcharge money for its intended purpose.

Wayne Yoshioka | Director, Department of Transportation Services



# PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, February 16, 2009, 11:28am HAST

## Survey: Americans would pay for infrastructure

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

A new survey suggests that Americans realize infrastructure is in bad shape and 68 percent would pay more taxes to help fund highway and bridge maintenance and new construction.

About 1,000 Americans were polled earlier this month for the survey commissioned by HNTB Corp.

More than four in five (81 percent) respondents say making sacrifices to pay for infrastructure improvements now will make the difference between a more prosperous or a more difficult future for the next generation.

The average American would pay \$22 a month to cut down on the time they spend in traffic by 20 percent, says the survey.

“These survey results show people understand the value infrastructure projects have in advancing job creation and economic competitiveness,” said Paul Yarossi, president of HNTB Holdings Ltd, in a statement. “By making it easier to deliver goods and services and respond to natural and man-made disasters, America will prosper.”

Other findings include:

- When asked about infrastructure spending in the economic stimulus package, 60 percent said highway and bridge maintenance and new construction was most important to them
- 81 percent think the expansion of high-speed rail and light rail transit systems can transform U.S. travel and commerce like the Interstate Highway System did during the 20th century
- 50 percent believe spending on highway projects should equal spending on public transportation
- 66 percent think freight and passenger traffic should be separated on the roads and rails

*Tierney Plumb of the Washington Business Journal (District of Columbia), an affiliated publication, compiled this report.*

February 17, 2009

## A contract to build, and operate, rail

*By Donovan Dela Cruz*

As the City and County of Honolulu faces numerous financial challenges during the next few years because of the global economic crisis and the loss of tax revenues, the city must re-evaluate the way it conducts business, especially when it comes to the procurement and construction of the \$5.28 billion mass-transit system.

A Design-Build-Operate-Maintain contract allows the private sector to build the mass-transit system and minimizes risks to taxpayers relating to cost overruns and project delays. The contract determines the number of years the private sector will operate and maintain the system. The city would not bear the entire burden of paying for operating and maintaining the system for the length of the contract.

To facilitate discussion on this important issue, I introduced Resolution 09-03, which urges the administration to enter into a DBOM contract to develop and operate the rail project. The resolution further encourages the selected contractor to enter into project labor agreements with local labor unions to ensure that jobs and monies stay in Hawai'i.

The DBOM approach has the potential for saving the city money because it provides a fixed price for the construction work early in the design process. This fixed price provides the public an opportunity to see the real cost of the mass-transit system and provides transparency for the entire process. The DBOM approach has been proven to complete projects early, on time, or relatively close to the originally scheduled date. It is to the DBOM contractor's benefit to build a system that operates efficiently so operation and maintenance costs are manageable.

This approach offers significant advantages over traditional design-bid-build contracts in achieving environmental sustainability goals, including: energy efficiency, water efficiency and material conservation.

The DBOM approach has been used successfully to develop the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system in New Jersey, the Las Vegas and Seattle Monorail systems and the Expo Line of the Vancouver Sky Train.

The Federal Transit Administration has recognized that the DBOM method provides cities with numerous benefits for transit operators. One benefit comes from executing a single contract with one entity at a pre-determined price. Maintenance of equipment will be with the contractor, and the contractor may be able to use its own credit rating to seek financing or put together a financing package for the project.

According to the FTA's Reports and Publications ("Lesson 43: DBOM Contract: Proper Delegation of Major Tasks"), the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit System was conceived as a conventional design-bid-build project, but "was converted to a DBOM to advance the completion date and to place more ultimate responsibility for the project with the contractor."

The FTA's Contractor Performance Incentive Report ("Case Study 2, Hudson-Bergen Light Rail"), also notes: "The DBOM project delivery approach was selected because of the estimated eight years that would be saved compared to the traditional multiple design-bid-award-construct approach."

A U.S. Department of Transportation report to Congress showed the \$300 million cost savings for the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail using a DBOM contract versus a traditional design-bid-build contract.

The administration and the Honolulu City Council will need to work together to ensure that taxpayer monies are being used efficiently and effectively in these hard economic times.

It has been reported that the half-percent transit tax collection for the mass-transit system could have a projected shortfall of \$29 million in revenue collected for current 2009 fiscal year. Having an open and honest discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the DBOM procurement method for the \$5.28 billion mass-transit project will show how we can save money in the long run for this much-needed system.

Let's ensure that the project is built on time and within budget. Using the DBOM procurement method will successfully accomplish this goal.

*City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.*

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February 17, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### **TheBoat, TheBus**

#### **City must be more transparent with data**

Since when does the city have the option of not providing the public data on programs when The Advertiser requested information about recent daily utilization from TheBoat? The city needs to immediately release all current data on TheBoat and TheBus. Where are the council members on this issue?

Not only did many taxpayers still think that the program was subsidized by the feds, I am sure they were shocked to see the \$120 cost per ride.

And if certain routes on the TheBus are not cost-effective that should be addressed. The public needs to know especially in understanding which routes could be less cost effective when rail begins.

Also, the city needs to request and release all GPS data that show which bus routes continue to be excessively late — or, worse, leave their assigned stops too early.

If this is the way the city plans to operate when the rail starts — hiding data — then we need a long talk with Honolulu Hale.

Michael Ullman | Honolulu



## Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, February 17, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 17, 2009

### **There are reasons our rail will cost more**

Robert Kruse ("[Letters, Jan. 28](#)") made a common mistake in comparing the price of the Phoenix area's new, street-level rail system with the cost of Honolulu's elevated train program. Having worked on both, I will note that while each system is 20 miles long, they are significantly different.

First, our trains will run twice as fast and carry twice as many riders.

Second, each project is suited for different train systems. Trains in the Valley of the Sun run on the ground because Phoenix is flat and spacious, with plenty of room for trains. In addition, the trains run on city-owned streets, greatly reducing land use costs. However, this eliminates traffic lanes for vehicles.

In contrast, land is precious in urban Honolulu, where our densely packed population lives on a narrow strip of land between the mountains and the sea. Our scarce terrain and population density are ideal for elevated trains. While more costly, this technology does not consume our valuable traffic lanes.

Finally, Phoenix's 20-mile line will reach only a small part of the population. In Honolulu our project will serve some of the most densely populated areas of the island.

Jerry Gill  
Parsons Brinckerhoff

February 18, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### **Roadways project**

#### **Put tax money toward energy efficiency**

I see that The Advertiser supports the monster roadways project proposed by the current administration. I agree that the gas tax needs to be raised, preferably to a level that would strongly discourage this major source of greenhouse gases — perhaps by a dollar or two to discourage wasteful use of cars.

These monies ought to be used for the urgent improvement of the energy efficiency within public buildings, installation of solar power at all state buildings (including schools), erection of windmills on any state land with a significant wind source, expansion of ocean thermal and wave power, and subsidies for private installations of solar, wind, or even white roofs.

This would allow the state to play with all that CIP without dumping it down the rathole that created our traffic nightmare in the first place. If this isn't enough spending, put the leftovers into accelerating the transit project.

Lon Polk | Honolulu

February 18, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### TheBoat

#### Stop bleeding, dump costly experiment

Regarding Sean Hao's excellent article on TheBoat (Feb 15): I estimated, at the very outset of the service, that the federal one-year subsidy of \$5 million, alone, on the basis of 260 days operation per year, would amount to \$32.05 per boarding passenger. Now it is apparent that local taxpayers must add a similar subsidy for each passenger, for an actual cost of about \$62 per one-way ride.

While I am in favor of experimentation, any responsible analyst should have anticipated what has happened before operations even began. Wayne Yoshioka says: "We can absorb the cost." But we should not! It is fiscally irresponsible to continue this failed exercise. Now the boats should be dumped to stop the bleeding.

Inviting bids for a helicopter commuting service, charging each passenger a nominal one-way fare of something like \$5, might be a viable, exciting and wonderfully time-saving alternative service for passengers, with endless flexibility in service they could provide, at considerably less federal and local taxpayer subsidies.

Gene Leupp | Honolulu

February 18, 2009

## Plans needed to put TheBoat on course

Commuter ferries are useful transit options in many places crisscrossed by waterways. Logic would suggest they should work in Hawai'i, too.

However, it's clear by what ridership information is now public that TheBoat still hasn't delivered the transportation alternative the Hannemann administration envisioned.

The city launched TheBoat two years ago as an adjunct to bus service.

It favors continuing the service for a third year, despite the heavy subsidy by taxpayers to keep fares even with TheBus.

Critics on the City Council say it's unclear whether the annual \$4 million investment is likely to pay off with increased ridership. And it will remain unclear until the administration provides a plan of how TheBoat service can become sustainable.

The Kalaeloa-to-Aloha Tower commuter boats sail at only 37 percent capacity, based on September data. Council members and The Advertiser have asked for more recent ridership figures and are still waiting for them. It's impossible to make budgetary decisions without reliable, up-to-date data.

And the city needs to provide further details.

Who are these riders? Commuters who want to avoid rush-hour freeway gridlock, or visitors who enjoy an inexpensive offshore cruise? Tourists are welcome aboard, but it's the local residents who should be targeted.

A report by city consultant Art Anderson Associates has identified some of the disincentives, including the lack of more convenient stops. No 'Ewa resident wants to backtrack to catch TheBoat, especially when it's often sidelined in poor weather.

Ferries tend to succeed in places such as Washington state when the riders have judged the convenience worth the price of the fare.

That has not happened yet on O'ahu. The city needs a new strategy for success, or it may be time to "abandon ship."



February 19, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### RAIL PROJECT

#### City Council not using taxpayers' money wisely

I agree with Wayne Yoshioka (Letters, Feb. 15) on keeping the GET surcharge for the rail project. It's too bad, however, that he is not as concerned about making the best use of taxpayer money by enabling a fair and open competition for the rail guideway and system technology.

The city's steel-wheel-on-steel-rail (SWSR) system, compared to the HSST urban mag-lev, will cost about \$570 million more for construction of the 20-mile guideway and will be almost \$1 billion (with a "B") more for operations and maintenance over 30 years for the airport routing. It seems that as long as more jobs (and votes) are created, it is OK to waste taxpayer money.

The City Council's Transportation and Planning Committee, after an hour-plus "love-in" with Mr. Yoshioka on his reappointment at its recent meeting, then deferred (i.e., killed) a resolution to change the contract for the first guideway segment from design-build to design-build-operate-maintain. Once the design-build contract is signed, for construction of an SWSR solid bridge guideway, the cost advantage of the mag-lev (and its chance to compete) will disappear. Obviously, the council also has no interest in saving \$1.5 billion of our money. "Pork" is about to ride the rails.

*Frank Genadio | Kapolei*

February 19, 2009

## State of the City speech today

Mayor plans to address budget, other issues such as waste disposal

*Advertiser Staff*

Mayor Mufi Hannemann will outline his plans to deal with the city's economic challenges during his fifth State of the City address today in the Mission Memorial Auditorium near Honolulu Hale.

City officials, like their state counterparts, face difficult decisions in the coming months as they attempt to keep budgets balanced amid stiff economic headwinds. Right now, nobody's ruling out tax hikes and fee increases as a means of filling an estimated \$13 million to \$40 million deficit in the fiscal 2010 budget year, which ends on June 30 of next year.

Hannemann has forecast a deficit of up to \$100 million in the fiscal 2011 budget.

"We all know that our economy has declined and many people are suffering," Hannemann said in a news release. "We also know that it will take leadership, hard work and effective collaboration to bring about the solutions our community needs."

The city's budget negotiations begin in March, when the mayor rolls out his proposed budget.

Apart from the budget, Hannemann today likely will address other city issues such as solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment, and provide an update on mass-transit plans, including the planned \$5.4 billion elevated commuter rail.

U.S. Sens. Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka are scheduled to attend, along with other leaders from government, business, labor and education.

## Additional Facts

Where to see it

The mayor's State of the City address this morning will be broadcast live on Olelo Community Television, channel 54, from 10 to 10:58 a.m.

# Mufi Talks Economy, Rail, in State of City Address



Written by Tim Sakahara - tsakahara@kgmb9.com

February 19, 2009 07:34 PM

In his fifth state of the city address, Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann did what everybody is doing these days: talking about money.

His theme was collaboration, creativity and commitment.

You could pretty much guarantee that during Hannemann's speech, he would sing and talk about rail transit. And he did. But the economy took center stage.

In song, Hannemann welcomed the audience to his world; a world that's focused on making it through the down economy.

He says the city will have a \$220 million budget shortfall over the next two fiscal years, which means hiring restrictions and fee hikes.

Furthermore, he announced that union workers and managers except for police and fire won't get raises and 36 of his directors and deputies will work one day a month without pay.

"We have to prepare ourselves beginning right now. That's why we're developing a two year budget, one that looks down the road rather than what's at the next intersection," Hannemann said.

"That's the spirit that will grow and I think we all have to contribute in some way to help our counties, our state and our country," said Sen. Daniel Akaka.

"We need to be open to all possibilities at this point," said Honolulu city councilmember Todd Apo.

"This wouldn't be a Mufi Hannemann speech without talking about rail transit," Hannemann said.

He talked about the plans by state administrators and some legislators to, as he calls it, "steal the transit money" to use in other areas.

"My administration views any attempt to divert the transit money as illegal and I'm working with our friends at the legislature to defeat this harebrained scheme and get it off the table," Hannemann said.

He also used the spotlight to fight with the Environmental Protection Agency, vowing to protest the secondary waste water treatment upgrades that he says would cost \$1 billion.

"I know that collabaration is the theme of my remarks but sometimes when you don't feel the love you have to put on the gloves," Hannemann said.

He has plenty of allies and a message for his enemies.

"If you're standing as a road block, if you're standing as an obstacle, if you don't want to play, we're going to say step aside because we need to do the will of the people and get it done," Hannemann said.

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### Related Story:

- [Read Mayor Hannemann's State of the City Transcript](#)



Last Updated ( February 19, 2009 08:30 PM )

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## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, February 19, 2009

### **Rail project will surely stimulate our growth**

The economy is on everyone's mind these days and much of our hopes fall on President Obama and the national economic stimulus package. All states are looking for "in the pipe, shovel ready" public works projects that are planned and ready to go so that people can be put back to work right away. Let's not forget that the largest public infrastructure project in the history of our state, Honolulu's rail transit project, is ready to go with groundbreaking set for the end of this year. The city has already issued a call for contractor bids to start on the first phase.

Rail would provide our economy with thousands of new jobs for the next decade and beyond, and bring in more than \$1 billion in new federal grant money, which does not have to be repaid by the city or local taxpayers. With the multiplier effect, new employment and public investment would benefit our entire economy and all residents.

Rail is a both a needed transportation improvement and an economic stimulus for Oahu.

Jason Wong  
Hawaii Kai

February 20, 2009

## Honolulu mayor takes 5% pay cut, freezes worker salaries

By Sean Hao

Honolulu will eliminate pay raises for some city workers, cut pay by about 5 percent for the mayor and his Cabinet and possibly scuttle its costly ferry boat service in an effort to fill a \$50 million budget shortfall in the fiscal year starting in July.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann discussed those and other city initiatives during his fifth State of the City address yesterday at the Mission Memorial Auditorium near Honolulu Hale. The mayor stuck to a theme of cooperation and shared sacrifice as a means of coping with difficult economic times.

Lower visitor arrivals, declining real estate values and rising unemployment are taking a toll on the local economy. For the city, that translates into flattening property, fuel and hotel tax income coupled with rising costs for emergency services, fuel and debt.

"What it will take to work ourselves out of this situation is collaboration, creativity and a commitment to a cause, and that cause is improving the lives of our people," Hannemann told an invited crowd that included U.S. Sens. Daniel K. Inouye and Dan Akaka, plus local government, military, business and educational leaders.

Among those making sacrifices are city union employees and their managers who won't be getting pay raises in the coming year. The mayor and his appointed Cabinet will work without pay one day a month, which equates to a 5 percent pay cut.

On the topic of public transit Hannemann provided an update on city efforts to build a \$5.4 billion elevated commuter rail from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The city hopes to begin construction in December, contingent on federal approval, and launch services between 2013 and 2019.

Hannemann called efforts by some in the state Legislature to defer the transit tax to plug its own budget holes "illegal."

"The train is here and it's moving ahead," he said, promising the project would result in "choke" jobs beginning this year.

Hannemann also said TheBoat ferry commuter service has suffered from maintenance and ridership setbacks. He said he's ordered an assessment due in April that will help decide whether to continue the \$5 million a year city-sponsored service.

Among other Hannemann initiatives:

- Exploring merging fire and emergency services into one agency better able take advantage of economies of scale.
- Inviting the state to collocate state services with city services on 16 acres of Kapolei land donated by Kapolei Property Development.
- Considering demolishing the Waikiki Natatorium pool, but reconstructing the facade at the Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center.

Hannemann also said the city has budgeted \$302 million to expand the city's H-power plant, which converts garbage to power, in Kapolei.

That's up from a preliminary cost estimate for the expansion of about \$100 million. However, the new figure likely includes the total cost of the project including the recent purchase of the H-power facility and a long-term service agreement with its current private-sector operator.

The city has said the cost of expanding the plant is significantly less than the cost of building a new facility.

The city plans to install a third combustion unit that would expand the facility's current processing capacity from 610,000 tons to 910,000 tons a year.

City Council Chairman Todd Apo, who supports the expansion, said he wasn't aware that the costs of adding the third H-power boiler had risen so high.

"That is obviously a number that there's going to be a lot of discussion on," he said.

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February 20, 2009

## Mayor's recovery plan calls for cooperative effort

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's "State of the City" address yesterday started with his now-characteristic turn at karaoke singing and a metaphor for shared sacrifice — the "stone soup" fable — but quickly got down to the meat and potatoes. The financial meltdown, and how it affects the city, certainly inspires more tears than songs.

Or, perhaps this stark reality is precisely what the mayor meant by his rendition of "Welcome to My World."

The city is facing a \$50 million shortfall for the next fiscal year, and expects revenues for the following year to decline even more, resulting in a deficit three times as bad.

That's the world of municipal bill-paying these days, one made a little easier in the short term by the money set aside for Hawai'i in the federal stimulus package.

It's critical that the funds speed their way into the local economy, and Hannemann sounded the right note by outlining a plan for efficiencies in permitting and city government generally, austerity programs and cooperation among the county and state agencies.

In particular, the streamlined, one-review permitting process for stimulus projects is a welcome one. Elements of that streamlining, particularly the city-state collaboration, should yield lessons that ought to carry over into city business permanently.

It would be good to see efficiency paired with public accountability, with a Web tracking site or other means of keeping the public informed of progress. This should apply to the stimulus funds especially, since there is a drive to pump jobs and revenue into the economy on a timely basis. But transparency measures also should apply to rail project contracts, with the first due to be issued in coming months.

Federal economic constraints, and the recovery plan passed to soften the blow, affect virtually every aspect of the city's own emergency response. City employees, from the top down, are forgoing pay raises; the mayor's cabinet joined in with a voluntary furlough that amounts to a 5 percent cut.

Hannemann has promised to convene nonprofits, which are also suffering through the downturn, in an effort to patch together a social safety net of programs, using community development block grants and shared resources. That's an encouraging development.

The city's grim fiscal outlook also has added to the urgency of its negotiations with the Environmental Protection Agency over its order to upgrade offshore sewage treatment plants. The city must redouble its effort to broker the best solution possible for taxpayers. The state should lend its support by aligning its water-quality criteria with current standards; that may help the city reach a livable settlement of the court challenge by environmental groups.

Among the other key points in the address:

- Hannemann wants to establish a city-state center in Kapolei, which would be a good use of land that's recently become available, serving Leeward residents who could use access to government services closer to home.
- An alliance is forming among the counties as purchasing partners, in an attempt to save taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. That's a promising idea.
- The mayor is seeking public input on proposals to pare down the number of neighborhood boards and to merge the fire and emergency medical service departments. As cost-saving approaches, these are worth exploring.



Ultimately the success of the plan Hannemann presented depends on a more collaborative spirit among public agencies at every governmental level.

If the unifying force of impending fiscal collapse can produce this kind of accord, that would be a silver lining in this very dark cloud.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, February 20, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 20, 2009

### **Diverting rail funds would be shortsighted**

I don't understand our governor and Legislature. Tourism and construction are the lifeblood of our economy. Along with military spending, these industries are the main engines that bring in money and keep our economy going.

With a worldwide recession, visitors might not be back to normal levels for several years. The construction industry also is down. The one bright spot is the \$5 billion rail transit project. That project will keep the construction industry going for many years. And when construction workers are employed, they spend their paychecks on groceries, meals and other goods and services that help keep other local businesses going, too.

It would be shortsighted and a huge mistake for our governor and Legislature to divert the rail funds to balance the state budget. Surely they must have better ideas.

Blake Miyasaki  
Hawaii Kai

February 21, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Rail transit

#### City should realize project is a mistake

The overwhelming number of responses to the draft environmental impact statement for the rail project call for the city to reconsider its proposed heavy rail overhead rail system. The city has always maintained that it wanted to work with the community and its varied professional and community associations. Now is the time for these concerns to be addressed and for the city to realize that the proposed system will not solve traffic problems, will be far too much of a tax burden on taxpayers and completely destroy the urban character of Honolulu.

The draft EIS did not give fair or adequate coverage to the alternative systems, namely bus rapid transit, high occupancy lanes or a light rail system at grade. The Phoenix and Charlotte rail lines are at grade and are fraudulently praised in the city's Web site, inferring that these are the types of projects that Honolulu will receive. Nothing could be further from the truth, for those systems could be built at half the cost and completed in half the time of the proposed overhead rail. No city in America is building the overhead rail but many are solving their transit problems by embracing light rail at grade or the other alternatives. Perhaps the city will listen now and pull the plug on this ill conceived project.

Geoffrey Paterson, AIA emeritus | Kailua



February 21, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### **Don't look for FTA approval of rail yet**

The comment period for the draft environmental impact statement for the rail project ended last week. Because of the shortfalls in the DEIS, there has been criticism from many individuals and citizen groups. The DEIS is deficient in so many required areas that the Federal Transit Administration will surely ask for a supplemental DEIS. This is a common request.

This supplemental DEIS will take months. Then another comment period will follow. Until then, Honolulu will not have a Record of Decision from the FTA, which would allow us to move forward. The FTA 2009 Report on New Starts Funding mentions 31 cities that are moving forward on projects from preliminary engineering to full funding agreements. Honolulu is not included.

Even if Honolulu had provided a satisfactory DEIS, it is doubtful our project would get a good rating from the FTA. A satisfactory rating is a requirement for funding. Our small population, small projected ridership and growing projected cost for rail will probably produce very low ratings. Honolulu will get its worst rating for mobility improvements. The city engineers have said that traffic on the H-1 with rail will get 50 percent worse than it is today.

John Brizdle  
Palolo



February 22, 2009

## Honolulu hopes \$1B will cover overruns in rail-transit costs

Some call for partners in private sector to help if project costs spiral

*By Sean Hao*

*Advertiser Staff Writer*

Will \$1 billion cover potential cost overruns on Honolulu's planned \$5.4 billion commuter train?

That's what city officials have budgeted. If they're right, then the city's plan to be the general contractor on the project and hire guideway and station builders, buy vehicles and possibly operate the train could save money in the long run.

However, if history is any indication, there's a chance Honolulu's train could cost more than anticipated, and the city, not a general contractor, would have to absorb the extra cost.

Recently built rail systems, on average, experienced 40 percent cost overruns, according to an April 2008 report by the Federal Transit Administration.

Concerns that the project could go over budget have prompted some to urge the city to shift more project control and risk to private-sector partners willing to shoulder the burden if costs spiral. Such an arrangement could cost the city more money up front, but save money in the long run, if costs exceed expectations or ridership levels disappoint.

"They should at least entertain it as an option, and if it doesn't work out they can use another method," said City Council member Donovan Dela Cruz, a main proponent for such a public/private partnership. "At the very least (it would) prove to the taxpayer that what we're doing is actually the most fiscally responsible way to handle this. You want to make sure that the dependency on the taxpayer pocketbook is the last resort not the first resort."

Under current plans, the city will use a limited form of private partnership called design-build for the first 6.5-mile segment of the 20-mile train. That arrangement makes contractors responsible for designing a system that works. However, later construction contracts will be done under traditional design-bid-build arrangements, which puts design responsibility on the city.

"The main reason we're pushing right now for design-build for the first segment is to get the project out and under way in a timely manner, but as we move down to other segments we do want to move toward design-bid-build on a lot of the projects because we'll have more time to actually finalize the design," said city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka during a recent public hearing.

Yoshioka added that current plans to break up guideway construction, station construction, vehicle purchasing and operations contracts will allow the city to keep a tight rein on companies working on the massive public works project. That should allow the city to stick to an ambitious timetable that could allow the first trains to start rolling by 2014.

It also will allow more, small local businesses to participate in the project, Yoshioka said.

"We're trying to maximize the involvement locally, so that's one of the ways we think we can achieve that," he said.

## City on the hook

If things don't go as planned, the city will be on the hook for any construction and operating cost overruns exceeding \$1 billion on the East Kapolei-to-Ala Moana elevated train.

Dela Cruz suggests the city enter into partnership with a private developer that would design, build, operate and maintain the elevated commuter rail. That one big contract could allow the city to fix system costs early, while placing the risk of cost overruns and delays on the contractor. Such risk-sharing would provide incentives to reduce costs, improve quality and decrease project construction costs.

Public/private partnerships have been used on numerous large public works projects on the Mainland. Driven in part by a lack of federal highway funds, public/private partnerships typically are used on highway projects where private partners can benefit from future tollway revenues. However, such partnerships are increasingly used on public transit projects such as trains.

For example, the eight-mile JFK Airtrain, which connects New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport to subway and commuter trains, was built under a design, build, operate and maintain contract. A major portion of New Jersey's \$2.2 billion Hudson-Bergen Light Rail also was built under a similar arrangement. According to a 2007 Congressional report by the Federal Transit Administration, the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail project was completed one to two years ahead of schedule because of the use of a design, build, operate and maintain arrangement.

Overall, per-project cost savings ranged from \$1 million to \$38 million compared with estimates based on the design-bid-build approach to project delivery, according to the FTA study.

"As one project sponsor observed, under a design-bid-build approach contractors would sit back and leave it to the sponsor to resolve design problems," the report stated. "On the other hand, with design-build, the contractor team members must implement what they themselves design, and will come to the plate much faster to make sure the design works than under design-bid-build."

While partnering with the private sector could save money in the long term, the upfront costs likely would be higher, said Joe Uno, president of Honolulu engineering consultant J. Uno Associates.

"If you want to shift the risk to the design, build, operate and manage (approach), then you have to pay for that risk up front," he said. "On design-bid-build (projects) you keep the risk, but the risk might cost you money later because you run into bones on the way or because your ridership isn't as high as you projected."

There's also the risk that the city may not be able to find a private partner or that private parties may find the projected cost of Honolulu's project unrealistic, said Robert Poole, director of transportation studies for the Los Angeles-based libertarian think tank the Reason Foundation.

## faulty estimates?

Critics of Honolulu's planned commuter rail contend the city deliberately underestimates the costs of the planned commuter train to build and maintain public support for the project. City officials contend that estimated project costs are conservative and adhere to strict federal guidelines.

A private partner could provide a litmus test on whether current project costs are in line with reality, Poole said.

"That would be politically embarrassing if they couldn't get a design-build or a design, build, operate, maintain firm to commit to the typical fixed price for things like this except for a price that's much higher than the current estimates," he said. "The area where you hope to gain the most from design-build or design, build, operate, maintain is precisely the area where the risks of the overruns and schedule delays are the highest and that's rail transit."

Poole cautioned that partnering with the private sector also could lead to project delays if private sector partners encounter financial or legal problems.

Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawai'i engineering professor, doubted that a public/private partnership would work for Honolulu's train. That's because political support for the projects has wavered. For example, in the current legislative session, state lawmakers are considering temporarily diverting tax revenues needed to build the train to help cover budget shortfalls.

"Every year they introduce bills to take that money away, so this is a very unsettled environment," Prevedouros said. "This is a very dicey project, so I don't think the private interests will approach it kindly. The project has to be highly desirable, therefore the possibility of politicians or the public actively opposing it are minimized. Then the private-sector banks, contractors and whatever are happy to participate."

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February 22, 2009

## Gas spill turns H-1 into a parking lot

Thousands of drivers affected in West O'ahu after 2,500-gallon spill

*By Michael Tsai*

*Advertiser Staff Writer*

Thousands of O'ahu motorists found their Saturday stuck in neutral after an Aloha Petroleum tanker spilled 2,500 gallons of gasoline onto H-1 Freeway near 'Ewa and police shut down all lanes for much of the day as a safety precaution.

The resulting diversion of traffic onto Farrington Highway slowed vehicles to a snail's pace, choked Farrington as well as side streets and any alternative routes, and turned everyday jaunts in and out of West O'ahu into Herculean tests of patience and brake-foot fortitude.

"There were cars as far as the eye could see," said Karen Curry of Kapolei, who spent an hour and a half in traffic on her way home from town. "It was a parking lot out there."

Paul Dombrosky, 62, of Kapolei had to scuttle plans to head into town when he found both onramps closed and traffic along Farrington Highway moving in good approximation of continental drift.

"There was constant traffic everywhere around here," he said. "Every side street was crowded. I couldn't go anywhere."

Dombrosky had to settle for take-out from the nearby Chili's restaurant and a quiet afternoon at home.

"This shot my Saturday right in the rear end," he said.

According to Honolulu Fire Department spokesman Earle Kealoha, the gas spill occurred in the east-bound lanes about a half-mile before the 'Ewa off-ramp when the drive shaft from a tractor broke and punctured the front compartment of a tandem trailer containing the fuel.

Foam and water were used to contain the spill; gasoline remaining in the trailer was transferred to another tanker. Both the tractor and the trailer were removed from the site around noon.

All three east-bound lanes between Kunia and Kapolei were shut down around 8:45 a.m., stalling traffic in West O'ahu all the way to Nanakuli. West-bound lanes were also closed about an hour later.

Police diverted motorists onto Farrington Highway, which runs parallel to H-1, in Kapolei and directed them to go all the way to Waipahu before getting back on the freeway, a police dispatcher said.

The first west-bound lane was reopened shortly before 1 p.m., and by 2 p.m. all three west-bound lanes and one east-bound lane were cleared for traffic.



The cleanup stretched into the early evening as crews dug deep into the grass shoulder bordering the median to remove contaminated soil. The final two east-bound lanes were reopened at 7:27 p.m.

Aloha Petroleum chief executive officer Richard Parry issued a statement yesterday afternoon apologizing for the spill and the traffic problems.

"We are very sorry for the inconvenience caused by the accident," the statement said. "We understand that many people's lives were affected by the spill and we sincerely apologize.

"We are extremely thankful nobody was injured. We thank the Honolulu Police, city and federal firefighters, state Department of Transportation and our own personnel for their very professional and effective response to the accident, and will continue to work to clean up and restore the area."

That wasn't much consolation to the Bosley family of Makakilo, who found themselves trapped in traffic not once, but twice.

Joshua and Lindsay Bosley, both 23, and their two young daughters left their house around 11 a.m. to return a rental car at a nearby drop-off spot. But a half-hour drive from the top of Makakilo to Farrington Highway, a drive that usually takes just a few minutes, caused them to arrive after it closed at noon.

Their only other option was to return the car to a location near Honolulu International Airport. Unaware of the lane closures, they left home at 4 p.m. only to find themselves in the middle of the H-1 snarl.

"We didn't know until we made the turn and saw all the traffic ahead of us," Lindsay Bosley said.

It took the family more than an hour to travel the four miles between the on-ramp and the site of the spill. Along the way, they had to pull over so Bosley could feed 7-month-old daughter Lucy.

Mike and Tammy Correa saw the traffic from their home in Makakilo and canceled plans to visit with family in town.

"A lot of people didn't know what was going on until they got onto the on-ramp," Tammy Correa said. "We watched some of them climbing over the little mountain (on the side of the road), just four-wheeling it because they were desperate not to get stuck in it."

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## Letters to the Editor

For Monday, February 23, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 23, 2009

### **Election made it clear that voters want rail**

If the citizens of Oahu voted for the rail, it's because they want rail. Tactics and excuses used to jeopardize the funds, in the hope of derailing the project, (no pun intended) underestimate Oahu voters' resolve.

Please don't touch the rail tax funds! If you don't like Mayor Mufi for whatever reason, fine, counter him with your own brain power and resources. This rail is not a Mayor Mufi thing, although he is the one with the wisdom, foresight and tenacity to see it through. It's our thing, the voters' thing.

All who are trying to sabotage the rail, don't promote your political agendas at our expense! How about getting in step with the mayor and President Obama's policy statement for revitalization? Let's get this canoe moving instead of looking for ways to sink it.

Pamela Plouffe  
Honolulu

February 24, 2009

## Hawaii police, firefighters defend their shutdowns of H-1 Freeway

Weekend's traffic jams were unavoidable, say police, fire officials

*By Suzanne Roig  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Police and firefighters yesterday defended their response to two separate accidents over the weekend that turned portions of H-1 Freeway into a parking lot for a combined 16 hours.

The first involved a fuel spill on Saturday of about 2,500 gallons of gasoline that closed portions of the freeway near 'Ewa for 10 hours. The second followed the death of a motorcyclist east of the 7th Avenue on-ramp on Sunday that kept lanes closed for six hours.

The motorcycle accident, which involved a rider traveling faster than 100 mph with a group of other cyclists, required a lengthy investigation, police said.

"The reason why the road was closed so long was the sheer size of the scene," police Maj. Frank Fujii said. "The scene was massive. Debris was spread over the entire roadway and we needed three hours to map the scene of each piece of evidence exactly where it was found."

Similarly, with the gasoline spill, officials didn't want to take any chances.

"It's about safety," said fire Capt. Terry Seelig. "The steps we took were all designed to ensure the safety of the public and the responders. It was a dangerous situation having gasoline spilling on the shoulder of the freeway."

The motorcyclist, who was identified only as a 35-year-old man, was riding a 2008 Suzuki west-bound near the 7th Avenue overpass. The motorcyclist hit a guardrail. A white Honda Civic driven by a 54-year-old woman struck the motorcycle, which landed near the Kapi'olani Boulevard off-ramp. The debris covered all four lanes of the westbound freeway and stretched for more than half a mile, police said.

The fatality was the 13th of the year, and the fifth involving a motorcycle, Fujii said.

Police closed the west-bound freeway from 'Ainakoa, the start of H-1, to the Old Wai'ala Road, Fujii said. At 'Ainakoa, three lanes of Kalaniana'ole Highway merge into one.

One lane of the H-1 was reopened three hours after the 4:30 p.m. accident and all the lanes were reopened by 10:30 p.m.

The last time a freeway closed for any length of time was in 2006 when a military truck and excavator struck the 'Aiea overpass on the 'Ewa bound H-1 Freeway. That accident closed the freeway for more than 10 hours.

It also led to several pieces of legislation — none of which became law — that would have required expedited investigations in cases involving deaths and critical injuries. Honolulu Police Chief Boisse Correa also asked for a review of the length of time that it takes officers to investigate fatalities, Fujii said.

Much of an investigation is about logging evidence and photographing it where it comes to rest, Fujii said. In addition, officers must question witnesses.

"The biggest factor is that our roadways are restricted and limited. Our initial response is to ... assess

what has happened," Fujii said. "We're looking at a scene of over one-half mile in length. Police investigate hundreds of accidents and clear them without the public complaining.

"We don't feel we were out of the norm," Fujii said. "We have a responsibility to the public to conduct a full investigation and this took longer because of the sheer size of the scene of the crash."

## **cleaning up the spill**

While the closure made Chad Ajimine late for his daughter's soccer banquet, he said that once he learned that there had been a fatal accident that caused traffic to back up to Hawai'i Kai, he understood.

It took him more than an hour to travel a distance that usually takes about 30 minutes, he said.

"The roads were so congested," Ajimine said. "It was frustrating because we were late for the event, but the police had to do their investigation. It's just one of those things you can't predict. There's nothing you can do about it."

During the Saturday fuel spill, the freeway was partially reopened after firefighters removed the rig and cleaned up the spilled gasoline at 1:30 p.m. Aloha Petroleum, the tanker company, brought in their own contract workers to clear soil on the shoulder that was exposed to the toxic chemical benzene, said Janice Okubo, state Department of Health spokeswoman.

That work took from 1:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., she said.

Aloha Petroleum officials were unable to provide details on the cleanup.

The fuel spill occurred when the drive shaft on the tanker truck broke and punctured the forward tank, said Seelig. Firefighters worked to contain the spill, and closed the freeway until the highly flammable vapor cloud dissipated.

"We work with the Department of Health and with a release like this and with this many players that have to come to a scene like this, it takes more time," Seelig said.

"No one agency does it. And it was done without further mis-hap."

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## Gas spill, crash make H-1 a parking lot

[By Leila Fujimori](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 24, 2009

Infuriated Oahu motorists flooded the Honolulu Police Department with calls complaining about two lengthy freeway closures over the weekend.

 Thousands Of Motorists Question Weekend Freeway Closure Duration



Portions of the H-1 freeway were closed for a total of about 15 hours over the weekend.

[ [Watch](#) ]



Police and fire officials at a news conference yesterday explained that the H-1 freeway's 10-hour closure Saturday was due to a gasoline spill and blamed the 5 1/2 -hour closure Sunday on a fatal motorcycle accident.

At 8:45 a.m. Saturday the Honolulu Fire Department got the report of the spill by a damaged Aloha Petroleum gasoline tanker in a westbound lane.

Fire Capt. Terry Seelig defended the need to close both sides of the freeway, as a volatile vapor cloud travels quickly and close to the ground.

Police began shutting down the H-1 freeway eastbound lanes from the Ewa/Kunia exit at about 9:15 a.m. and eventually closed westbound lanes as well. All lanes were reopened by 7:30 p.m.

State and federal firefighters assisted, applying foam over the approximately 2,500 gallons of spilled fuel.

The tractor's drive shaft had dislodged, puncturing the first compartment of a 5,000-gallon tank on the tractor, which was pulling a second 5,000-gallon tank on a trailer.

The Fire Department left at 1:30 p.m. when the tanker truck was hauled away.

The remaining cleanup of a grassy area was conducted by a private contractor and continued until shortly before 7:30 p.m.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said Aloha Petroleum hired a contractor to remove the contaminated soil, and the freeway had to remain closed to do the work safely.

The 5 1/2 -hour closure of the H-1 freeway Sunday in the westbound lanes near the 7th Avenue overpass was needed to conduct a thorough investigation by HPD's Vehicular Homicide Section, said HPD Maj. Frank Fujii. Police took three hours just to map the accident scene since the debris covered a half-mile. He said an investigation includes interviewing witnesses and photographing the area to reconstruct the scene in case a crime occurred.

A 35-year-old Kapolei man was traveling more than 100 mph when he slammed into a guardrail and was thrown onto the roadway as his 2008 blue and white Suzuki motorcycle continued on. The man then was struck by a car, Fujii said. He was taken in critical condition to the Queen's Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 5:06 p.m.

February 25, 2009

## **H-1 oil spill**

### **Keep public informed during emergencies**

Frustration and anger were commonly felt by thousands of Honolulu motorists on Saturday when a fuel truck expelled 2,500 gallons of gas on H-1 Freeway. The response to this mishap by HPD was necessary.

However, being gridlocked for hours is not as bad as not knowing why. No information was forthcoming on five major radio stations I tuned into. Most stations are automated on weekends with only a tech present to handle the EAS. Tom Moffat's "live" morning show was bombarded by callers. There are no traffic reports on weekends nor anyone with a pulse manning the control boards. Fortunately, I got KITV's Paula Akana, who explained the problem. I relayed that to Tom on-air. It is human nature to feel anxiety when no information is forthcoming.

A system needs to be in place so local media gets the information for broadcast. Perhaps (city administration spokesman) Bill Brennan could facilitate that for the city, and corporate media could ensure the stations have someone in-studio who could digest the info and broadcast it.

People would be less anxious and more understanding when they know what is happening to them. Just a thought!

Keaumiki Akui | Kapolei

February 25, 2009

## March 9 deadline to file for seat

Council likely to decide today on timetable for race in Dist. 3

*Advertiser Staff*

Candidates for the Honolulu City Council seat representing Kailua, Kane'ohe and Waimanalo would have until March 9 to file their nomination papers, under a proposed timetable for a special election that's likely to be approved by the council today.

The special election to fill Barbara Marshall's former seat would be conducted primarily as a vote-by-mail election. Marshall died Sunday from cancer.

Under a schedule announced yesterday, the city will mail out ballots to District 3 voters on or about April 3. The deadline for ballots to be returned to the city clerk will be April 23. The winner of the election is expected to be announced that evening.

No polling places will be open on April 23. However, walk-in voting sites are expected to be available from April 6 through April 21.

The estimated cost of the special election is about \$250,000. The term runs until January 2013.

Key issues for the district include bed-and-breakfast regulation, property taxes, Honolulu's planned \$5.4 billion commuter rail and the continued use of the Waimanalo Gulch landfill.

Marshall, 64, died in Orange County, Calif., Sunday morning on her way home from treatment at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. The native of Berwyn, Ill., was first elected to the council in 2002. She previously was a reporter for KHON-TV from 1979 to 2000.

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# Marshall's post to be filled by mail-in, walk-in vote

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 25, 2009

The city will hold a mail-in ballot special election to fill the City Council vacancy created by the recent death of Councilwoman Barbara Marshall.

The deadline for the city to receive ballots in the mail from registered Windward Oahu voters is April 23. There will not be an official voting day, such as in primary and general elections, but the city plans to have walk-in voting for two weeks at Honolulu Hale.

"We want to try and provide the highest level of voter participation," said City Council Chairman Todd Apo. "Mailing out ballots to all registered voters instead of a voting day seemed like a good way to go."

The City Clerk's Office and Apo made the announcement yesterday, two days after Marshall died from colon cancer.

Since Marshall's diagnosis last summer, she has remained out of many City Council affairs, leaving her constituents in Windward Oahu without much representation.

Her staff vowed to stay on to support Windward Oahu residents until the end of the special election.

"While her passing has had a tremendous

## Key election dates

Here are important dates regarding an upcoming special election to fill Councilwoman Barbara Marshall's seat:

**March 9:** Last day for candidates to file nomination papers

**March 23:** Deadline for candidates to file financial disclosure statements

**March 24:** Last day for Windward Oahu residents to register

**April 6 to 21:** Walk-in voting at Honolulu Hale

**April 23:** Last day for ballots to be received. No polling places will be open.

## Instructions:

Ballots will be mailed in early March. Ballots must be received before 6 p.m. April 23 in the return envelopes provided.

impact on many of us, we owe it to her to provide the community with a true continuity of service," her staff said in a joint statement yesterday. "She always said that any neglect of our community would be completely inexcusable."

It will cost about \$250,000 to send ballots to the roughly 55,000 registered Windward Oahu voters, according to Bernice Mau, acting city clerk.

"We're trying to save the city as much money as possible," Mau said.

The City Council post pays \$45,084 a year,

Candidates interested in running for Marshall's seat would be able to file after the City Council meeting tomorrow afternoon. The term would end in 2012.

These candidates will not have to collect signatures to file to run, unlike in typical elections, Mau said.

Possible candidates include some local politicians that have been out of the political scene and some fresh faces.

Former City Councilmen Steve Holmes and John Henry Felix have expressed interest in running for the seat.

Holmes and Felix served together on the nine-member City Council together during the 1990s. Holmes later went on to join former Mayor Jeremy Harris' administration.

Some new politicians include Marshall's aide Ikaika Anderson and Marshall's former opponent in the 2008 primary election, Leigh Prentiss.

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# Midweek

February 25, 2009

## Different rails

In his recent letter, Robert Kruse made a common mistake in comparing the price of the Phoenix area's new, street-level rail system with the cost of Honolulu's elevated train program. Having worked on both, I will note that while each system is 20 miles long, they are significantly different.

First, Honolulu trains will run twice as fast and carry twice as many riders.

Second, each project is suited for different train systems. Trains in the Valley of the Sun run on the ground because Phoenix is flat and spacious, with plenty of room for trains. In addition, the trains run on city-owned streets, greatly reducing land-use costs. This does, however, eliminate traffic lanes for vehicles.

In contrast, land is precious in urban Honolulu, where our densely packed population lives on a narrow strip of land between the mountains and the sea. Our scarce terrain and population density are ideal for elevated trains. While more costly, this technology does not consume our valuable traffic lanes.

Finally, Phoenix's 20-mile line will reach only a small part of the population. In Honolulu, our project will serve some of the most densely populated areas of the island.

*Jerry Gill*

*Parsons Brinckerhoff*

*Honolulu*

February 26, 2009

## KITV traffic alerts will be based on PS systems

KITV on Monday will launch a new online, cell-phone and television alert system that monitors traffic flow using global positioning systems in vehicles.

By monitoring GPS positions of commercial vehicles and others that are on the road all day, the system will allow the station's new full-time traffic reporter, Yasmin Dar, to provide real-time travel times "rather than someone watching a traffic cam and getting information from the city and state and guessing how long the commute is going to take," said Mike Rosenberg, KITV president and general manager.

KITV will launch the new system Monday on its morning news show, Web site and a free cell-phone system.

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February 26, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **Rail money**

### **Voters want project, so don't touch funds**

If we the citizens of O'ahu voted for the rail, it's because we want rail. The tactics and excuses used to jeopardize the funds, in the hope of killing the project, underestimate O'ahu voters' resolve. Don't touch the rail tax funds! If you don't like Mayor Mufi, for whatever reason, counter him with your own brain powers and resources.

This rail is not a Mayor Mufi Hannemann thing, although he is the one with the wisdom, foresight and tenacity to see it through. It's our thing, the voters' thing. All you who are trying to sabotage the rail, do not promote your political agendas at our expense. Instead, get in step with the mayor and Barack Obama's policy statement for revitalization. Let's get this canoe moving instead of looking for ways to sink it.

Pamela Plouffe | Honolulu

# PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Friday, February 27, 2009

## Watch for the big grab from dedicated Hawaii state funds

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Digging out enough money or imposing cutbacks to cover a \$1.8 billion budget shortfall in state government isn't an easy task, especially if employment levels and benefits are essentially left intact.

Watch in the next few weeks for legislators to get serious about raiding special funds, even those that have carefully earmarked purposes. Especially vulnerable is the Hawaii Hurricane Relief Fund brimming over with \$185 million that's supposed to help people like the victims of Iniki in 1992.

There are two funds that we believe should be totally off limits.

One fund, accumulated through the half-cent excise tax increase on Oahu, would pay part of the costs of a mass transit system. So far, it has \$300 million and it's been suggested that the state could appropriate some or all of that for budget deficit and repay it when times are better.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann says that would amount to stealing the funds "choosing to do what's easy over what's right." We absolutely agree.

Another potential plum is the \$33.3 million accumulating at the rate of 2 cents for every cigarette sold in Hawaii. The money is supposed to pay for a new home for the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii. If the new \$200 million facility is not built, the center could lose its prized national designation as one of 63 approved by the National Cancer Institute. The gamble is not worth it.

## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, February 27, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 27, 2009

### **Adding Ko Olina stop might save TheBoat**

My wife and I are retirees vacationing in Hawaii, we noticed the article in last week's paper about TheBoat and its lack of passengers. The route is Aloha Tower in Honolulu to Kalaeloa, Barbers Point Harbor, very near the inviting public access lagoons at Ko Olina. We went to Ko Olina to see those nice resorts and lagoons. From the marina at the southern-most lagoon you can see TheBoat about 200 yards away across the mouth of the harbor. But there is no timely or convenient way to get there from the north side.

If TheBoat were simply to make a stop on the north side of the harbor I am certain ridership would increase, especially on the weekends. Certainly vacationers like us would ride TheBoat and probably enjoy it.

Please consider this simple and obvious solution to increase the number of TheBoat passengers.

Jim E. Sollid  
Los Alamos, N.M.

February 28, 2009

## Rail risk-management plan awarded to California firm

*Advertiser Staff*

The city awarded a \$26,950 contract to a Riverside, Calif., company to create a risk management plan for Honolulu's \$5.4 billion commuter rail project.

Caltrop Corp. won the contract out of four firms that submitted bids.

The contract was the first of about \$1 billion worth of contracts the city plans to award during the coming year related to the rail system.

The city has an ambitious plan to start construction in December. The first of those contracts involves conducting a risk management feasibility study for the 20-mile train linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Caltrop will advise the city as it solicits bidders for bigger contracts later this year, including a \$550 million to \$600 million deal to design and build the first phase — an elevated six-mile guideway from East Kapolei to Leeward Community College.

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# Honolulu Rail Transit Project

**Honolulu On The Move** 

566-2299 | [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)

# Planning for the Future

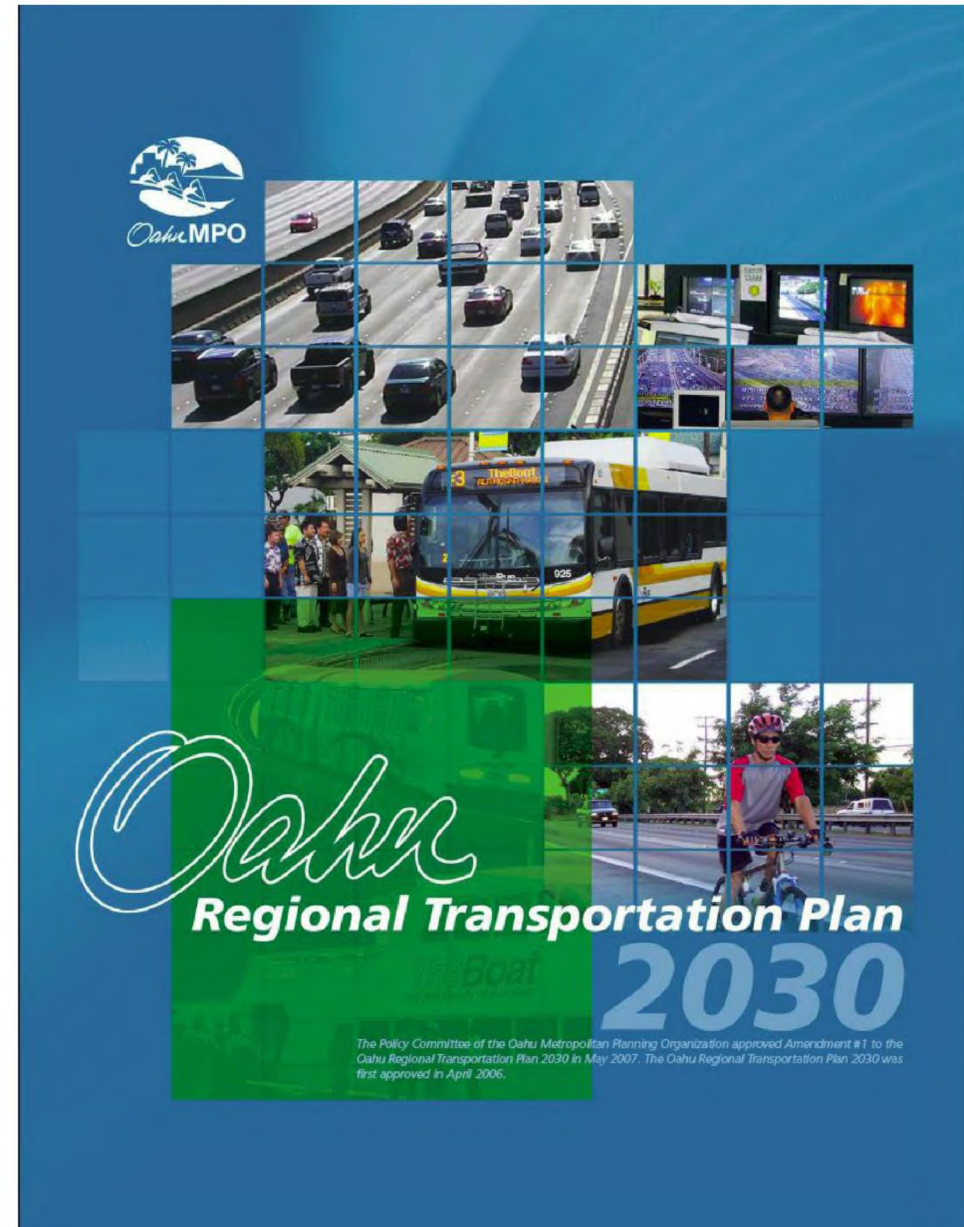
## O'ahu in 2030

- 200,000 more residents than in 2005  
(22% more people)
- 100,000 more jobs than in 2005  
(21% more jobs)
- 750,000 more daily trips than in 2005  
(27% more trips)

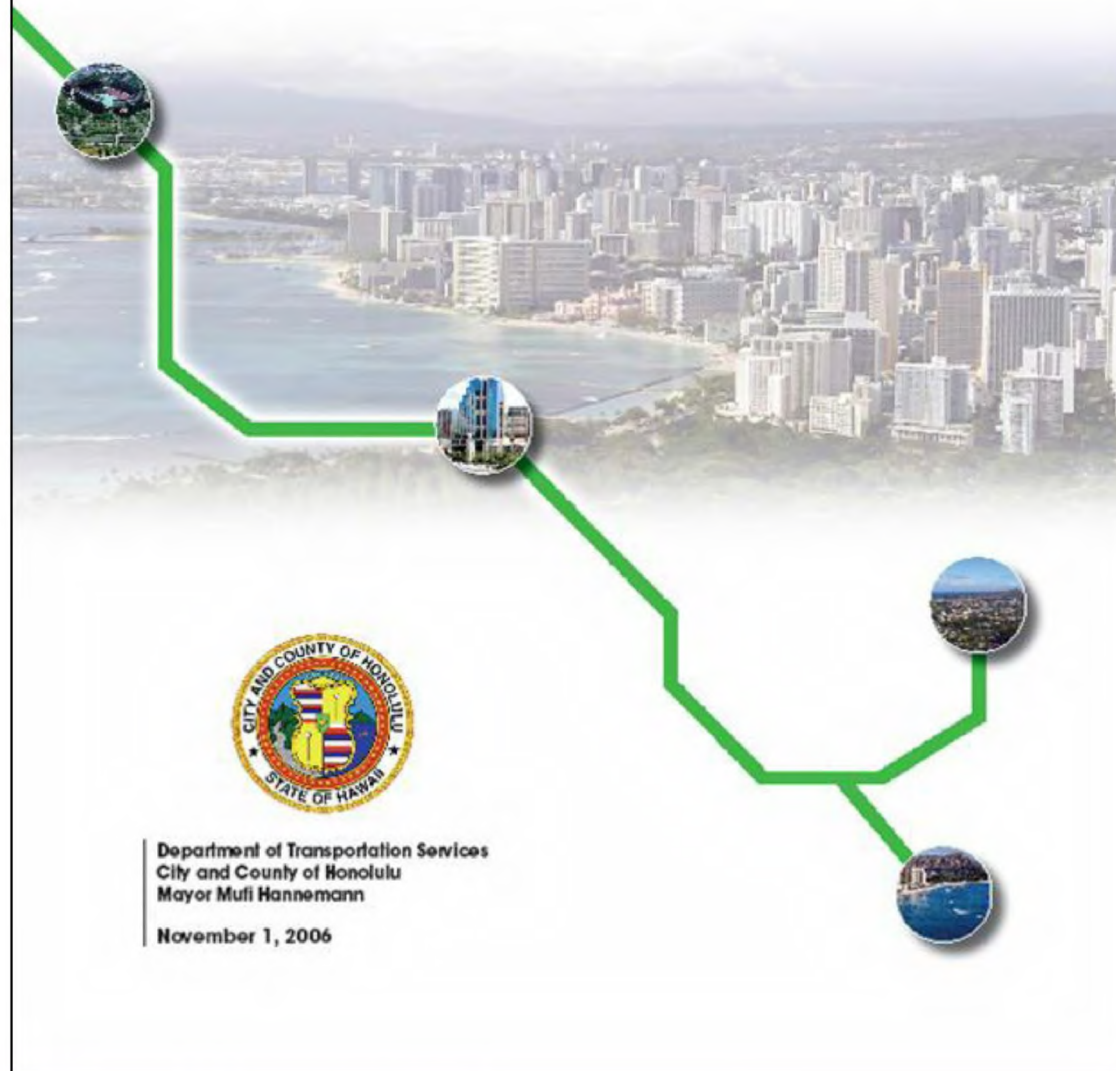


# Multi-Modal Options to Improve Mobility

- Highway Expansion
- Traffic Engineering Improvements
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects
- TheBoat
- Expansion of TheBus
- Fixed Guideway Project



# Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Report





# Four Alternatives

- No Build
  - No Transit Improvements
- Transportation System Management
  - Expanded Bus Service
- Managed Lane
  - Buses on Managed Lanes
- Fixed Guideway
  - Alignment Options

# City Council Selection

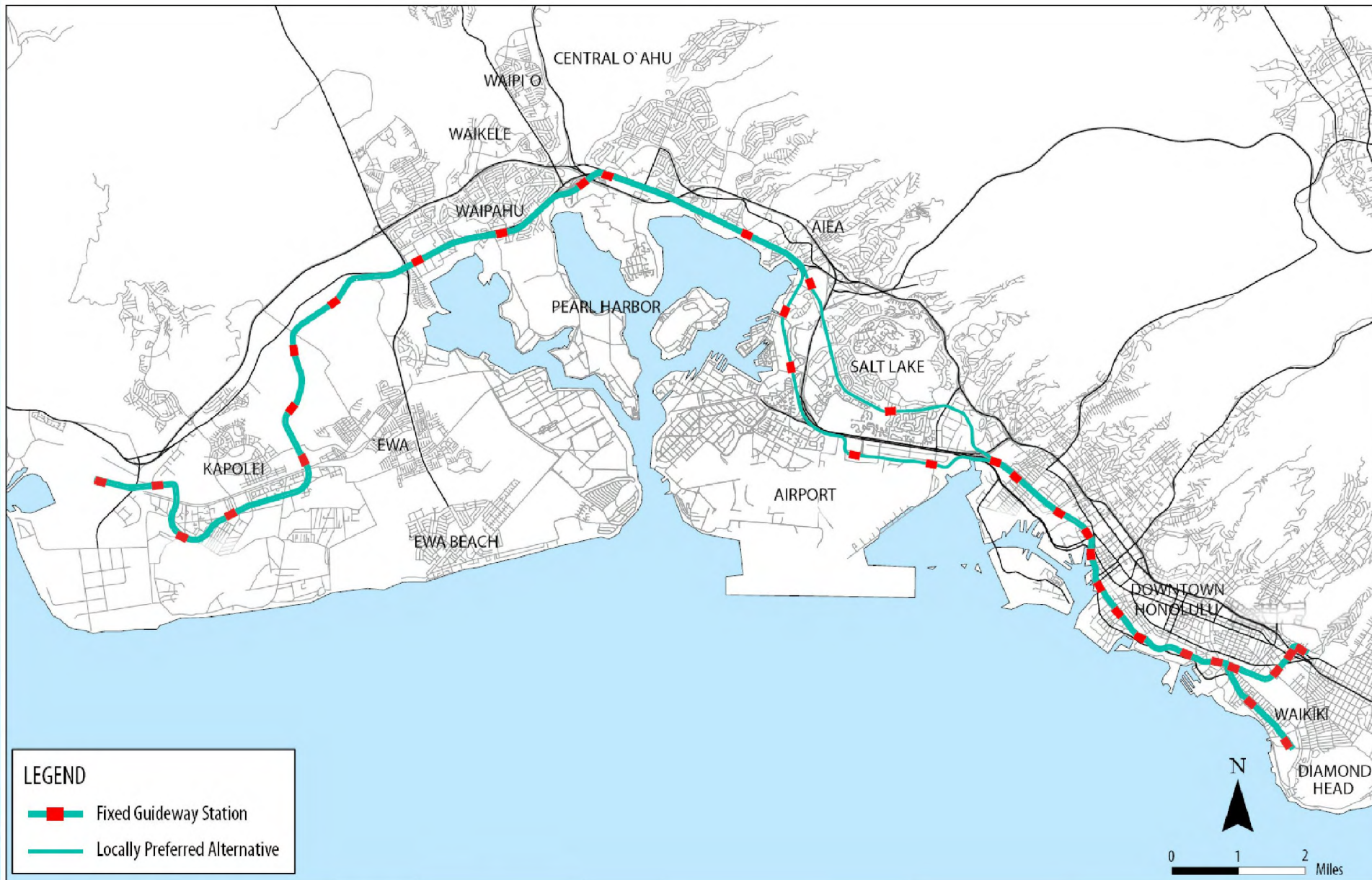
## December 22, 2006

- By a vote of 7 to 2 the City Council selected Fixed Guideway

COUNCIL	12/22/06	CR-508 ADOPTED. BILL 79, CD2, FURTHER AMENDED ON THE COUNCIL FLOOR TO CD2, FD1, HOWEVER, BILL 79, CD2, FD1, FURTHER AMENDED TO BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2), AND SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED THIRD READING, AS AMENDED (BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2)) (NOTE: BILL 79 (2006), PROPOSED CD2, FD1 (NORTH-SOUTH BRANCH, NON-LPA COMMITMENT) WAS ALSO CONSIDERED AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN)					
	APO Y	CACHOLA Y	DELA CRUZ Y	DJOU N	GARCIA Y		
	KOBAYASHI Y	MARSHALL N	OKINO Y	TAM Y			

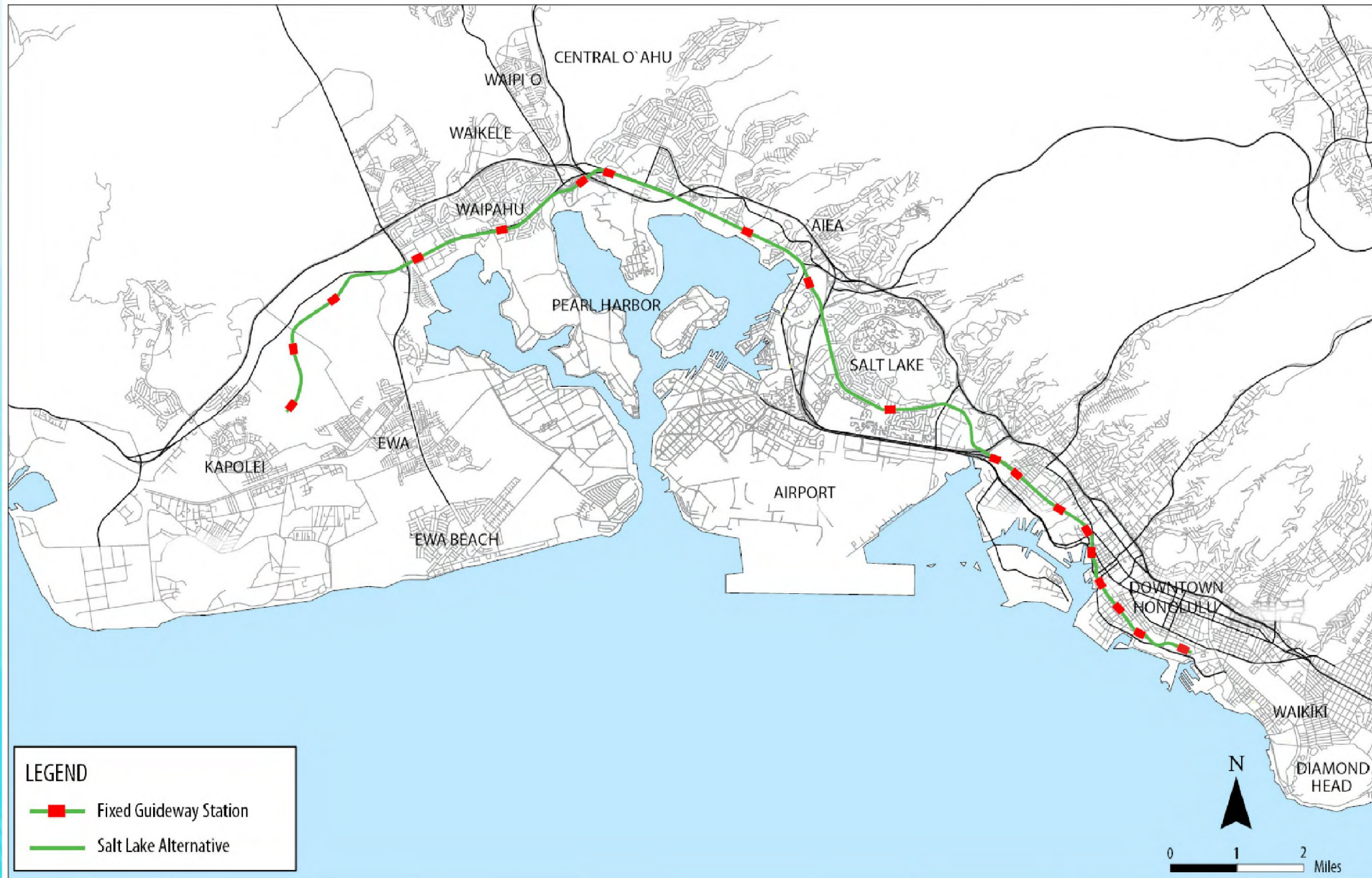


# Locally Preferred Alternative





# First Construction Project

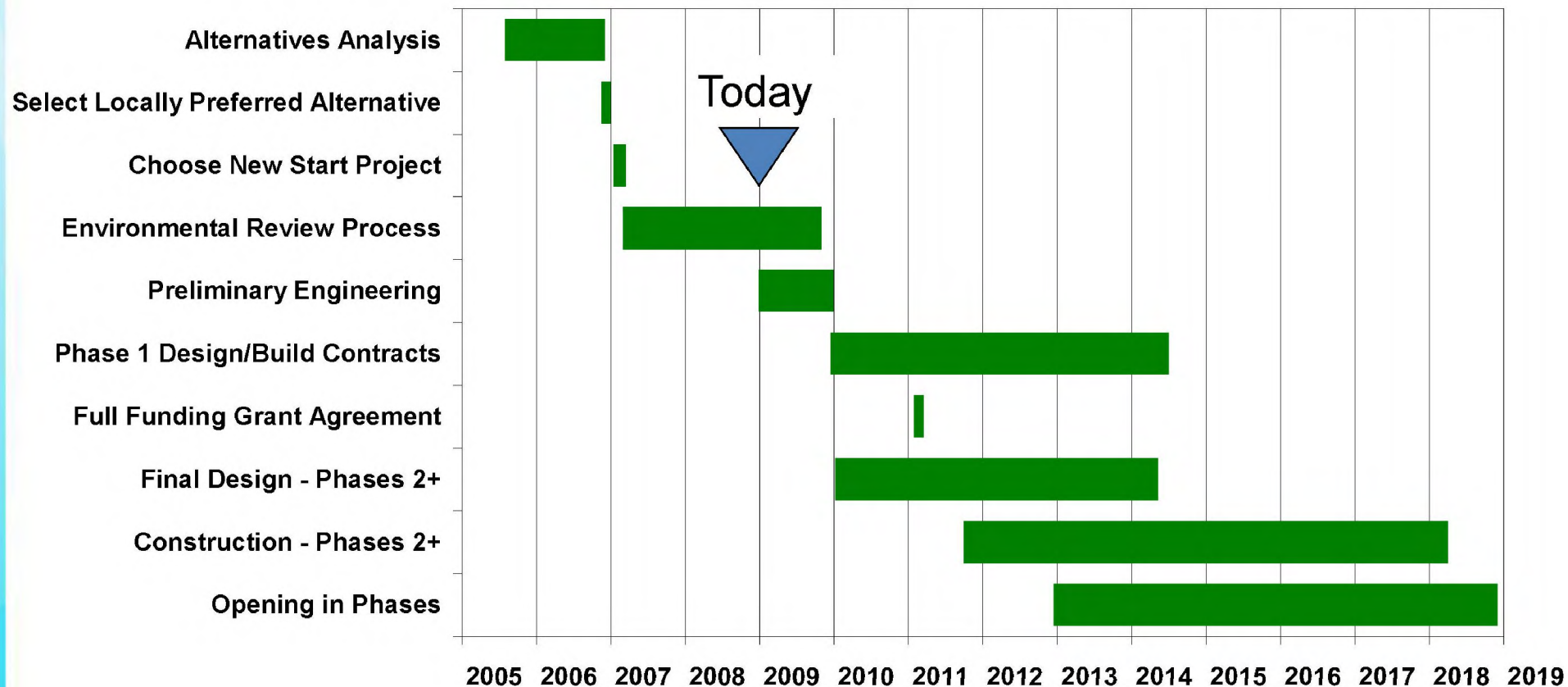




# Summary – Decisions Made

- Choice of Mode
  - Fixed Guideway in Exclusive Right-of-Way
- Choice of Alignment
  - Initially – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
  - Ultimately – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- Choice of Vehicle Technology
  - Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

# Project Schedule

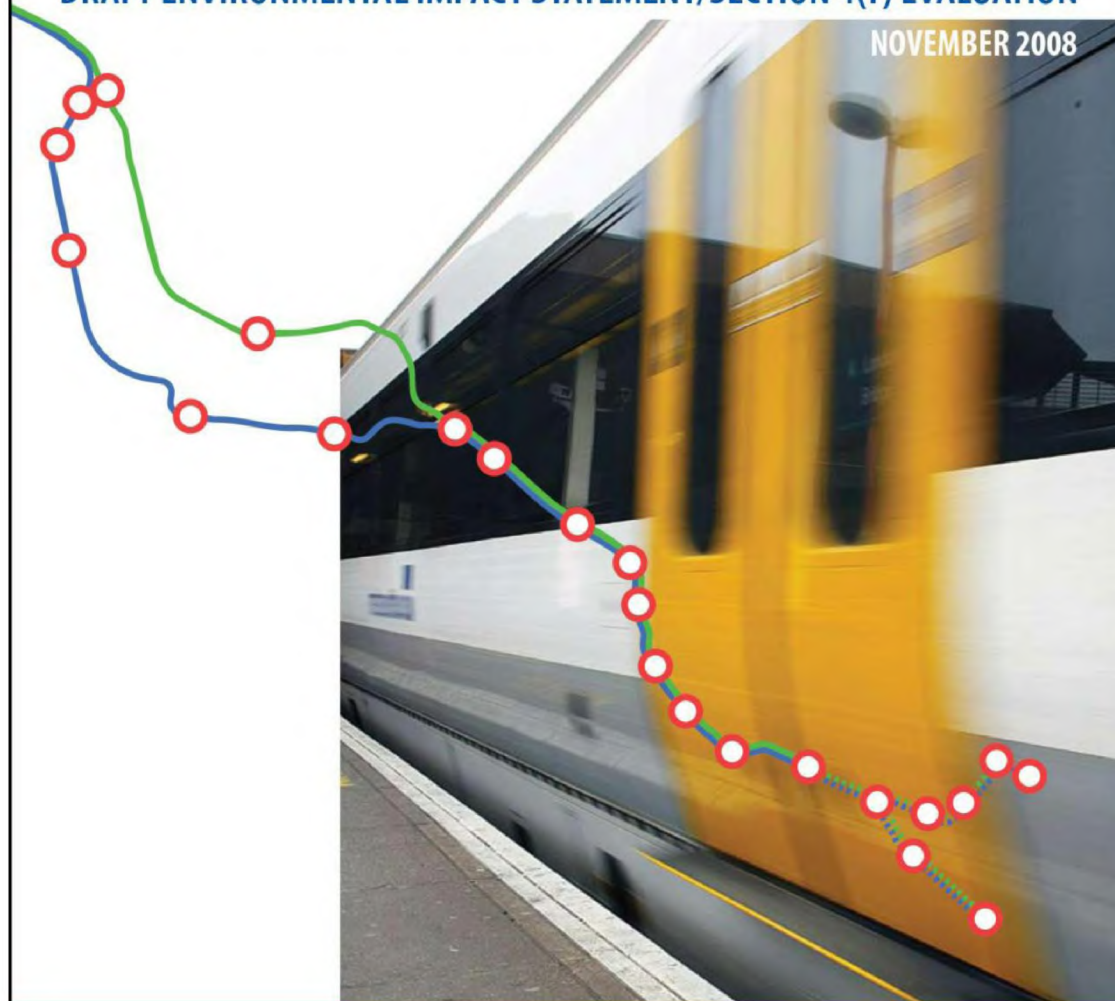





# Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

## DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

NOVEMBER 2008



 U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration



# Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 | [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)



# Draft EIS Outline

- Chapter 1 Background, Purpose and Need
- Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered
- Chapter 3 Transportation
- Chapter 4 Environmental Analysis,  
Consequences, and Mitigation
- Chapter 5 Section 4(f) Evaluation
- Chapter 6 Cost and Financial Analysis
- Chapter 7 Evaluation of Alternatives
- Chapter 8 Comments and Coordination



# Draft EIS Alternatives

- No Build
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Salt Lake
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Airport
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Airport & Salt Lake

# Transportation Effects

- 2030 Fixed Guideway Daily Riders
  - Salt Lake Alternative: 88,000
  - Airport Alternative: 95,000
  - Airport & Salt Lake Alternative: 93,000
- Reduction in 2030 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay
  - Salt Lake Alternative: –21%
  - Airport Alternative: –23%
  - Airport & Salt Lake Alternative: –22%

# Property Acquisitions & Displacements

Alternative	Parcel Acquisitions			Displacements by Land Use		
	Total*	Partial	Full	Residential Units	Commercial & Industrial Businesses	Churches
Salt Lake	190	155	35	20	62	1
Airport	179	145	34	20	65	1
Airport & Salt Lake	205	170	35	20	67	1

\* Total parcel acquisitions includes full and partial acquisitions.

Partial Acquisition = acquisition of only land and possibly minor buildings on a property. The existing owners would continue to be able to own and use the property in the future.

Full Acquisition = acquisition of the entire property—land and all buildings on the property. The existing owner and existing land uses would be displaced by project improvements.



# Visual Impacts – Examples

- Kamehameha Highway at Ka‘ahumanu St.
- Ala Lilikoi St. at Salt Lake Boulevard
- Kamehameha Highway near Radford Dr.
- Crossing Nu‘uanu Stream
- Halekauwila St. at Mother Waldron Park



# Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



# Ala Liliko'i Street at Salt Lake Boulevard





# Kamehameha Highway near Radford Drive



# Crossing Nuʻuanu Stream





# Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



# Noise Effects

Residential buildings, parks and schools with noise impacts

Alternative (2030)	Moderate Impacts	Severe Impacts
Salt Lake	23	0
Airport	18	0
Airport & Salt Lake	18	0

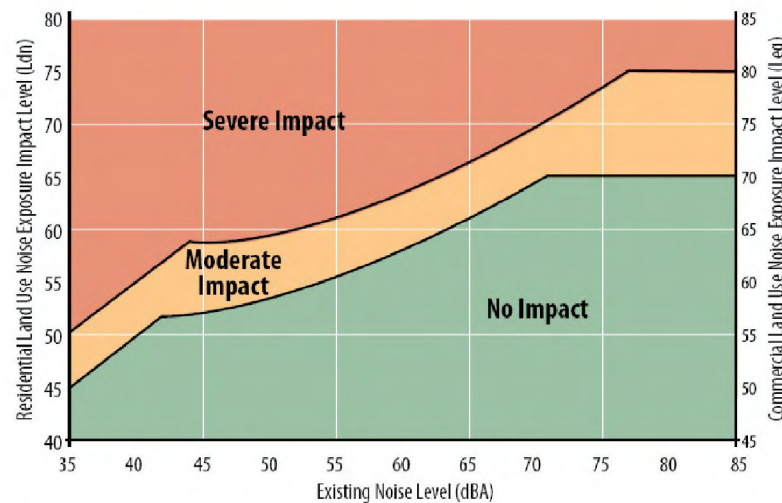


Figure 4-38 FTA Transit Project Noise Exposure Impact Criteria



# Jobs Created

Alternative	Construction Cost 2007 \$ (millions)	Average Number of Jobs per Year (9 years of Construction) <sup>1</sup>			
		Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
No Build	\$0	0	0	0	0
Salt Lake	\$3,921	4,000	1,700	3,900	9,600
Airport	\$4,125	4,200	1,800	4,100	10,100
Airport & Salt Lake	\$4,803	4,900	2,100	4,700	11,700

<sup>1</sup> Multipliers of 9.25 for direct, 4.03 for indirect, and 8.90 for induced jobs are based on the 2008 State of Hawai'i Input-Output factor for heavy civil construction (jobs per million \$)



# Cost to Build

	Millions of 2008 \$
<b>Salt Lake Alternative</b>	
Capital Cost	3,920
Finance Charges	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,280</b>
<b>Airport Alternative</b>	
Capital Cost	4,120
Finance Charges	380
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,500</b>
<b>Airport &amp; Salt Lake Alternative</b>	
Capital Cost	4,800
Finance Charges	540
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,340</b>

# Sources and Uses of Funds

Salt Lake Alternative	Millions of FY 2008 \$	Millions of Inflated \$
GET Surcharge Revenues	3,255	4,050
FTA New Starts Funds	1,000	1,200
Interest Income	25	30
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>4,280</b>	<b>5,280</b>
Capital Cost	3,920	4,800
Finance Charges	360	480
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>4,280</b>	<b>5,280</b>

# Operating & Maintenance Cost

- Rail operating & maintenance cost, after fares, will be ~\$40 million a year
- 2-3% of the City's annual operating budget, an amount that could be accommodated without an increase in taxes

A bus+rail system costs less than the cost of carrying the same number of riders on a bus-only system



# Where to Get a Copy of the DEIS?

- Libraries (for review)
- City Offices
  - Fasi Municipal Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor
  - Ali'i Place (1099 Alakea Street), 17<sup>th</sup> Floor
- Download at [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)
- Order a free electronic version on DVD or order a printed copy at cost. Call 566-2299 or visit [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org) to order.

# How to Comment on the DEIS

- In writing to: Department of Transportation Services, 650 S. King Street, 3rd Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813.
- Online at [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)

The public comment period ends February 6, 2009

# Stay Informed

- Sign up for the newsletter
- Watch Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30pm
- Visit [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)
- Call the project hotline: 566-2299
- Stay informed with *accurate* information



# *Mahalo!*